



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



HEAVENLY LOVE

AND

EARTHLY ECHOES.

Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas and Archibald Constable,

FOR

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

LONDON HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

CAMBRIDGE MACMILLAN AND CO.

GLASGOW JAMES MACLEHOSE.

HEAVENLY LOVE

AND

EARTHLY ECHOES

BY

A GLASGOW MERCHANT,

AUTHOR OF "THE REASON OF HOPE," "THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH,"

"I MUST KEEP THIS FEAST," ETC.



FOURTH EDITION.

EDINBURGH:

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

1873.

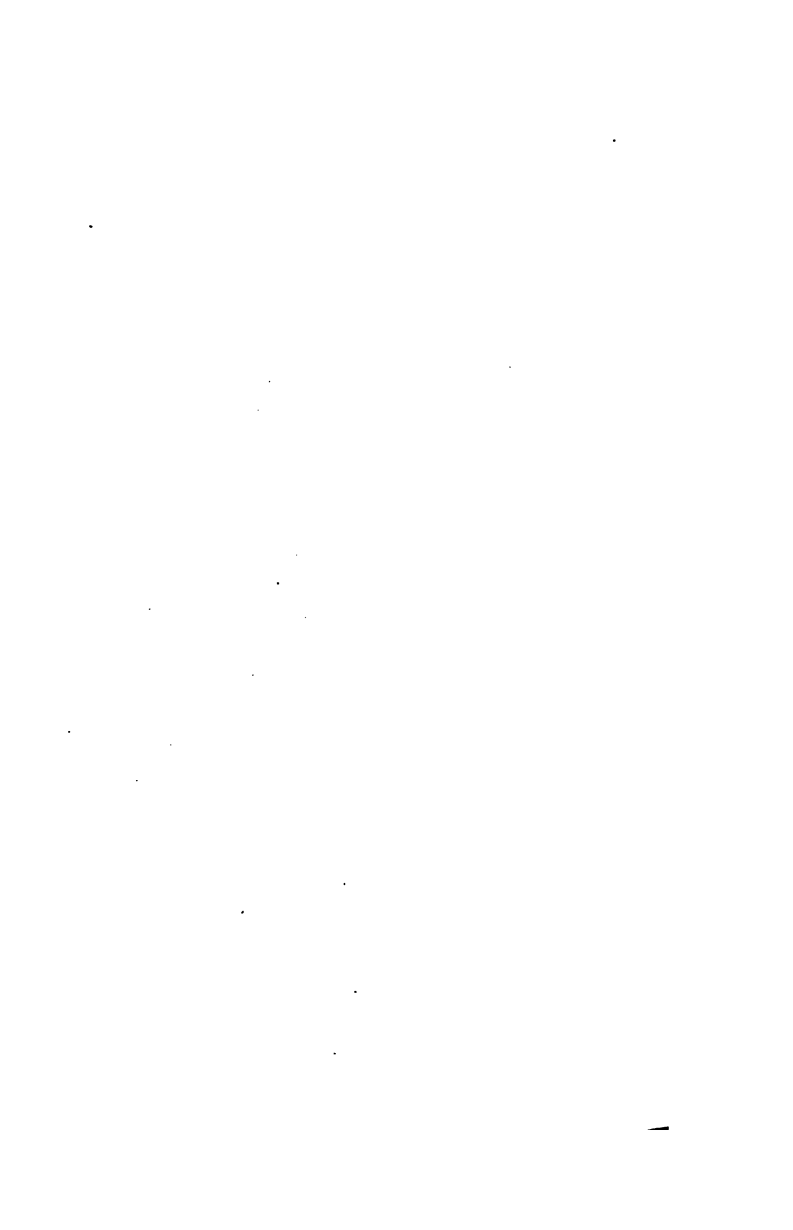
141. m. 133.

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THE title of this volume is taken from its first two papers. The goodness of God, especially as revealed in the work of Redemption, and the responsive love and devotion of human hearts delineated in these articles, will be found illustrated in a variety of forms all through the book.

The Author is glad that a third edition is called for, and hopes it may be blessed to promote the glory of God and the good of man—the objects at which he aimed when he first ventured to send his little production into the world.

GLASGOW, *May 4*, 1871.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
HEAVENLY LOVE REVEALED THROUGH SOME OF THE RE-	
LATIONSHIPS OF LIFE,	1
I. THE RELATION OF FATHER,	2
II. THE RELATION OF MOTHER,	8
III. THE RELATION OF BROTHER,	14
IV. THE RELATIONS OF BRIDEGROOM AND HUS-	
BAND,	20
EARTHLY ECHOES OF HEAVENLY LOVE,	28
I. CHILDREN,	30
II. YOUNGER BROTHERS AND SISTERS,	44
III. THE BRIDE,	56
IV. THE WIFE,	60
THE CULBIN SANDS,	76
"THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH,"	92
MR. BRUCE AND HIS FRIENDS : OR A CONVERSATION CON-	
CERNING PRAYER—	
PART FIRST,	110
PART SECOND,	117
CONVERSATION REGARDING SOME PHASES OF CHRISTIAN	
EXPERIENCE,	122

	PAGE
DIVINE RECIPES FOR PROMOTING SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS—	
RECIPE FIRST,	143
RECIPE SECOND,	153
THE GOSPEL IN SYMBOL: SOME BRIEF THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EUCHARIST,	162
A MEDITATION IN VIEW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER,	168
DEATH WELCOME,	173
I. CAROLINE B——	177
II. MARY W——	191
III. JANE M——	197
IV. MAGGIE W——	200

HEAVENLY LOVE REVEALED THROUGH SOME OF THE RELATIONSHIPS OF LIFE.

THE goodness of God is everywhere calling on sinners to return to Himself. Were our eyes opened and our ears unstopped, we would see in every lovely thing of earth a reflection of His beauty, and hear in every tender sound the still small voice of His love. A revelation from heaven was needed to show us, that temporary and sensible objects are but the types and shadows of spiritual and eternal realities, and to furnish us with a key to decipher the hieroglyphs of nature. What new and striking views of many earthly matters are suggested by the parables of the Bible! But there are often whole parables of the most interesting kind conveyed by a single word,—one stroke of the divine pencil revealing an expansive landscape of inviting pastures, and tree-fringed rivers, and “delectable mountains,” lighted up by a sun that shall never fade, where the humble hoping heart may luxuriate, inhaling the breezes which blow from the “hills of frankincense,” and gathering strength for the prosecution of his journey to the promised land.

The field is very wide; but for the present I

vain to his unselfish, his unchanging love; and that his head and heart and hand would, even if he needed to chide, be still at your service to pour blessing on his child.

It is not an easy task to fathom all the depths of love in a true earthly father's heart. Some fathers cannot let it out in full volume, until the occurrence of a painful incident unlocks the flood-gates. I believe never boy had a wiser or kinder father than I; yet I was twenty-four years of age before I knew the exceeding intensity of his affection. I was going away to the other side of the world, with little human hope of meeting my father again on earth. He had seen me to London, but had to return to his home before my vessel sailed. He was already seated in the railway carriage at Euston Square, which was to convey him to Scotland. We had shaken hands, and tried to utter our farewells, though the words would hardly come. The signal for starting was given, and the train was moving slowly away, carrying him I loved so dearly; but in the brief moment ere he was out of my sight, I read in the mental agony which his countenance then revealed, far more than I had ever previously discovered of the unfathomed depths of his affection.

Is there one of my readers who has sometimes been inclined to question the fervour of his earthly father's love, because he seems at times severe, and less inclined to grant requests than his child deems desirable? Oh, consider every restraint as

a token of love ! Believe that your father's affection for you has a reality and a measure beyond words to declare, and that oftentimes he assumes the severe expression to hide the depths of his regard, or because, in the circumstances then present, it is the only proper utterance of a love both wise and true. Doubtless an earthly father *may* err ; but I am sure of this, that except in cases where sinful indulgence has seared the conscience and steeled the heart, the honest aim of an earthly father is to do all that in him lies, and according to his best judgment, for the promotion of the well-being of his offspring.

Whether the experience of my readers will lead them to agree with me in what I have just said or not, you will all coincide with me in this, that there are some fathers on earth noble, and generous, and wise, and good in all their actings towards their children. Take, then, all the most beautiful and attractive features of paternal wisdom and love, gather them into one resplendent rainbow of excellence, and you have a glass which faintly reflects the Fatherhood of our God. Let us look at some passages in which this sweet epithet of Father is applied to the Eternal and Almighty One.

Jeremiah iii. 19.—“But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations ? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father ; and shalt not turn away from me.”

THY FATHER waits to welcome thee to all the joys of His house and home. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians vi. 17, 18).

II. *The Relation of MOTHER.*—Nothing in nature is more ardent and lasting than the love of a mother to her child. From the earliest moment of existence to the latest, a cry of need from her offspring awakens every tender and anxious feeling of her heart. What toils are hers none but a mother can tell. Night and day she watches over her helpless infant, tending him with a thoughtful care, and ministering with an unselfish and undying affection to every want. If a father's love is strong, and deep, and wise, a mother's love knows no end, and can hardly be broken by the severest strain. A wise and good mother will not foolishly indulge her child; but who has not found that he might apply to mother with confidence, for what he could not ask from father? Who has not experienced that his mother could enter into his childish hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows, and aversions and desires, better far than any one else in the world? Who has not known how his mother covered his little blunders, kissed away his pain, gratified his

longings, wept in his anguish, and rejoiced in his gladness? Who has not discovered that ingratitude, and disobedience, and even cruel unkindness, can never banish love from a mother's heart, though her agony may often find vent in tears over the wickedness of her foolish child?

Well do I remember the day when I went in to gaze on the face of my own beloved mother, after her precious dust had been wrapt in the garments of the grave. What memories crowded in upon my soul during that solemn hour! Under her loving care a bright and happy home had mine been all my days, save when I had marred its joys by my own fretfulness. Her love was of that gushing, tender kind, which delighted in forgetting self and lavishing its riches on those around. Far more did it pain her for another to harm her child than to injure herself. No labour was too arduous, no watching too long continued, no self-sacrifice too great if her children's interests were at stake. To part with them, with little or no hope of meeting them again, was worse than death to her. A dear, dear mother she had been to me, to us all. Now there lay the casket which had enshrined the beauteous gem; and no more on earth would her hands clasp me to her bosom, or her lips speak a cheering welcome. As I gazed and wept, thoughts of heavenly consolation stole in. Thus ran the whispers in my heart:—"If this one ray of light was so gladsome, what must the Sun of Righteousness, who lighted it,

trust in your Father in heaven as implicitly as your children trust in you.

But where, it may be asked, are the scriptural grounds for attributing to our God the tender and ardent and untiring love of a mother, as well as the strong and wise affection of a father? I reply by quoting Isaiah lxvi. 10-13: "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

Here, my friend, tried perhaps and tempted sore to let go faith in God, is a strong cordial to quicken and refresh you. All the promises to Jerusalem are promises to the Church or company of believers; and every believer, every one really desiring to be saved by Jesus from sin and wrath, is entitled to lay hold on every such promise as made to himself. Well then, in all your times of sadness, in all your hours of self-condemnation for backsliding and rebellion and ingratitude, consider how your own mother would exert herself to

comfort you ; how she would draw you to her bosom, and whisper her forgiveness, and speak of happy days yet in store for her much-loved child. Heap one upon another all the kind and gracious and tender consolations she would minister to you ; and then reflect, for the quickening of your faith, that your God in Christ desires you to expect no smaller comfort from Himself. However far cast down, however ashamed and abased, let thoughts of the motherly tenderness in the heart of your Maker and Redeemer draw you close to His bosom ; and as you lean on Him, let the utterance of faith be heard : “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God ; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

But there is more still to quicken confidence. In Isaiah xlix. 13-15, we find these cheering words :—

“ Sing, O heavens ; and be joyful, O earth ; and break forth into singing, O mountains : for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”

In this passage we are reminded that the strongest hope in the creature may be disappointed.

Even a mother may, in the intensity of her own anguish, forget to have compassion on the son of her womb. Yet He who formed the mother's heart cannot, will not forget the poorest, neediest one, that infant-like stretches out the hands to Him. Who are His children, "His elect in whom His soul delighteth?" They are known infallibly by this,—that they "cry day and night unto him," just as a sucking child craves for its mother. To each, to all of these, our God in Christ declares, "I will not forget thee." "Behold," He adds, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me" (Isaiah xlix. 16, 23).

III. *The Relation of BROTHER.*—What a world of real and deep and enduring affection starts up before the eye of memory at the mention of the word "*brother*," to one who has been blessed with such a relative, especially a true elder brother! From age and position, he is in some respects more accessible, and more capable of entering into the ideas of the rest of the children of a family, than the parents themselves. What a helper to the younger branches! How ready to take their part against a foe, to assist them with counsel in a difficulty, to shield them from attack, and to vindicate their cause! How powerful his good example upon all in the home circle that are beneath him in age! And if, mayhap, the father be removed by death, how will such a

noble brother become his mother's burden-bearer and sage adviser, and act to all his brothers and sisters a very father's part.

Two Turkish brothers had been carried into slavery at Leghorn. It was possible to attain freedom, if only by extra labour they could raise a fixed amount of money. The elder of the two exerted himself greatly, and being the stronger and cleverer, he managed in time to gather enough to free one of them. The money he carried to the governor, and asked that his younger brother should be released. His request awakened surprise; and when asked why he did not employ the sum for his own redemption, he replied, "Because my brother, not having any money, would remain all his life in slavery; and because, when I shall have laboured some years longer, I shall redeem myself in turn." This magnanimous conduct was forthwith reported to the Grand Duke of Tuscany; and he was so much affected by it, that he ordered both brothers to be immediately set at liberty, without the payment of any ransom whatever.

Another beautiful example of fraternal love once occurred in London. A wealthy merchant there had two sons. The younger had fallen into foolish courses, and up to the time of his father's death behaved so improperly, that his father thought it right to deprive him by will of all share of his property. The tidings soon reached the youth who had so grieved his father's heart,

but not a murmuring word escaped his lips. All he said was, "I have deserved it." The elder son was speedily informed of this agreeable change. He hastened to meet his repentant brother, and addressed him in the memorable words:—"You are aware, my brother, that by his will my father has made me his sole heir. It was his intention to disinherit you as you were then, and not as you are now; therefore I restore you the portion which belongs to you."

You need not me to tell you, that it is to the Lord of Glory that the passage in Proverbs xvii. 17, is truly and fully applicable:—"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Indeed, Jesus practically adopted this designation of *Brother* as His own, as the following touching passages amply prove:—

Matthew xxv. 40.—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matthew xxviii. 10.—"Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

John xx. 17.—"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Though truly the Almighty and Eternal God, this wonderful Person was, in lowliest circumstances, born into the world, our very brother-man,—born for the day of our adversity. What-ever is noblest and loveliest in an elder brother's

character is only a type and a picture of that generous, unselfish devotion to our cause which burns in the bosom of Jesus. Who stood in the breach that we might be delivered? Who became our surety and substitute, the substitute to bear the curse in our stead, the representative to work out a perfect obedience, which, counted to us, might entitle us to heaven? Who purifies our hearts by His Holy Spirit that we may be made fit for glory? Who was it that wept because His younger brothers and sisters in Jerusalem would not permit Him to save them? Who was it that, as He toiled along the road to His dreadful death, forgot His own agony, and thought only of the coming doom of those around Him? Who is it that is our Intercessor at the throne of God, pleading with justice to spare His rejectors for a time? Who is it, O sinner, that has come often to the door of your heart and knocked, and pleaded beseechingly that you would accept His love, and let Him carry you home to glory? It is the Elder Brother, who bade farewell for more than thirty years to the joys of heaven, and lay in the manger, and toiled at the carpenter's bench, and went about preaching salvation, and at length poured out His life's blood, that He might become a Saviour to you and to me. As our "brother born for adversity," *the only one* that is able to shield us from the wrath to come, He presses His kind, His infinitely kind and gracious services upon us. And, oh, what language is too severe

to designate the wickedness which spurns such a Brother away!

Who among my readers but would rejoice to have a noble, an influential, a self-sacrificing brother to lean upon, in the cloudy and dark day of trouble and trial! And how would *he* delight to exert all his powers, and tax all his resources, for the deliverance of a born sister or brother that relied implicitly upon him! If, too, he had been uniformly successful in every cause he undertook, the thought of our own earthly elder brother being engaged in our behalf would make us repose in peace. We would feel assured that our interests were so safe in his hands, that anxiety might be for ever dismissed.

Just such an one is the Elder Brother from heaven, only words cannot describe all His excellence or His power. So also does He love to be trusted, with respect to all our affairs, but especially in regard to our eternal welfare. It will be no robbery or presumption for us to put on the garments of His righteousness, and in them to claim a blessing from His Father and our Father; for He is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah xxiii. 6). As our Advocate at the bar of the Almighty, He will certainly bring us off victorious, for "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews vii. 25). And if only we will put our sinful selves unreservedly into His hands, we

need have no fear with respect to death or judgment; but rest with Paul, in the firm persuasion that "he is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day" (2 Timothy i. 12).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah xxvi. 3). An example of this sweet repose in Jesus, I was privileged to see in the summer of 1867. I had then frequent occasion to visit a young cabinet-maker who was hasting to

"That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns."

Whenever he came to understand that the Lord Jesus was "made a curse for us," and had wrought out in our nature a righteousness to entitle us to heaven, he clung to Christ as all his salvation, and attained a peace that kept his heart and mind all through his dying days. The thought of the Elder Brother, who had become our substitute and representative, filled him with calm, yet assured hope. A few days before his departure, I called upon him. He was very weak in body, but in spirit joyful; and his countenance betokened the happiness within. After a little conversation he said to me, "I will not be long here now." And then his face brightened still more, and with a sweet smile playing round his mouth, he went on to remark, "I expect when I go that angels will be waiting to conduct me to Jesus, and He will

be? If this one drop of love was so sweet and delightful, what must be the ocean of infinite love whence it came to refresh and cheer?" And so my mother's love and grace and goodness became a sort of Jacob's ladder, enabling me to climb into the bosom of the Eternal, and find there true repose for my weary head and aching heart. If *she* was so kind and forgiving; if *she* delighted so much in my welfare and progress; if *she* would give up the best she had to promote my interest, will He who made her, and decked her with all that rendered her so beautiful in my eyes, prove less worthy of my regard? If I could trust her so unreservedly, and pour out all my griefs so confidently into her bosom, and count so surely on her loving-kindness, may I not trust my God more, tell Him all my sorrows more fully, and expect from Him more, far more than from a mother's love? If the creature of yesterday was so lovely and so loveable for her spiritual excellencies, what must be the Infinite, and Eternal, and Unchangeable Being, of whose beauty and loveliness the brightest manifestations in any creature are but a feeble and glimmering reflection?

Often since that time has the thought of my father's and my mother's love helped me to renewed confidence and hope in God. The earthly is a type and shadow of the heavenly; and whatever there is in the experience of parental kindness to awaken regard, ought to

lead us beyond the creature, and to quicken faith in the Fountain-head of all goodness and wisdom and love.

If the enjoyment of a father and mother's love is thus calculated to help a child to trust in the Giver of every good and perfect gift, ought not parents, who understand the intense tenderness of their feelings towards their own little ones, to have an unbounded confidence in Him who is the Father of us all? Let fathers and mothers of earth look within themselves. Let them consider the unceasing, the self-denying affection which burns within their breasts towards their children, even when their sons and daughters have gone far astray. No tongue, no pen can give it full expression; but it is creature love after all. Well, however, does it typify, in a manner appreciable by the human mind, the infinite tenderness and love of the Great Creator Father. Remember the amazing cry which the backslidings of His professing children extorted from His lips: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Hosea xi. 8, 9). As you meditate upon the unfathomable parental love which these wonderful words reveal, learn to

righteousness, because hitherto refusing to give thy God and Saviour thy heart, be sure of this, that Jesus has come again at this moment to thee, desiring that thou wouldst choose Him for the bridegroom of thy soul. Oh! what joy wilt thou give Him if thou wilt consent to flee from thy sin, and from thine own evil and unbelieving heart, to His tender embrace. "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so will thy Saviour God then rejoice over thee." He shall then see in thee the fruit of the travail (the sore agony) of His soul, and shall be satisfied. By no other course but giving thyself ENTIRELY TO HIM canst thou make Him glad; and is there among my readers one heart still stony enough to refuse Him this pleasure? I say nothing at present of the folly, the utter madness, of rejecting such a Friend as thy soul's Bridegroom. I beseech thee to reflect on the awful ingratitude, and the proof it affords that every noble and generous emotion is dying out of the soul, when one can deliberately deny to Him who groaned, and bled, and died on Calvary, the only thing for which He asks, namely, the satisfaction of calling us His own, saving us from our sins, and bringing us to be partakers of His glory above.

A number of years ago I was one evening speaking, regarding religious experiences, with a young woman employed in a spinning factory. About two years earlier she had been brought to a knowledge of the truth, and to a happy trust in

her Saviour. Previous to her conversion she did not know the letters of the alphabet; but she soon began to learn to read, and for years now has been a Sabbath-school teacher. In the conversation to which I have referred, she quoted the words from 1 John v. 10 :—"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;" and I asked her to tell me what they meant,—*not* what she had read or heard about them, but what her own experience led her to think was their meaning. She responded at once :—"I will tell you, sir, what I think. When I hear a sermon about the love of Jesus, or read about it in a book, I feel His love so going round my heart, that I long to get near Him. And sometimes in prayer I get such tastings of His grace and goodness, that I would then and there willingly leave my body behind, and fly away to be with Him for ever." "Do you always have those feelings?" said I. Somewhat sadly, she replied, "Not always. When I do not think of Him for a time, and when I allow earthly things to fill my heart, it gets cold again." "And what do you do then?" I asked. She answered, "I go to Gethsemane, and then to Calvary, and gaze on my suffering and dying Redeemer, till my heart glows again with love to Him who so loved me." Whatever may be said of the factory-girl's explanation of the passage she had quoted, and no doubt it may be otherwise expounded, this much is certain, she well knew the best means to quicken faith and

love in a human heart. Come, then, every doubting spirit, afraid, perhaps, because of thy coldness and thy backsliding, come with me and contemplate the Bridegroom in the garden and on the cross. Let those groans of agony, let that bloody sweat, let the thorn-crowned brow, let every gaping wound attest His love and rekindle thine. Consider Him who thus laid down His life for us, till confidence revives. As you muse the fire will burn, and ere you are aware, your lips will be uttering the apostle John's confession, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19).

Second, The Relation of Husband.—Husband and wife are legally one, so that however poor and needy the wife may have been before marriage, her nuptials with a titled and wealthy husband confer upon her all the dignity and riches of him to whom she has been united. But husband and wife are one also in heart love, if the marriage is what it ought to be; and in this case mutual esteem and affection will day by day increase, in place of being diminished. To ward off all threatened evil, to comfort and refresh his wife with every possible blessing, will be the daily, hourly care of the husband. He will bear her burdens, he will soothe her sorrows, he will gratify, as far as within his power, her every proper desire; and the unceasing exhibition of his loving-kindness will so intensify her regard for him, that she *will live ever more and more only in his smile.*

Though faith in all the rest of the world should perish, she will still confide in her husband.

Infinitely more than any man can be to his wife, is Jesus to the soul that yields to the drawings of His love ; but to convey to our minds some idea of His tender and unceasing affection, He calls Himself *Husband* to His people.

Isaiah liv. 5.—“Thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name.”

Ephesians v. 31, 32.—“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

A military officer and his spouse were voyaging to a distant shore. The ship was overtaken by a dreadful hurricane. Alarm was pictured on the face of almost every passenger ; and the soldier's wife among the rest was overwhelmed with fear. Her husband preserved the utmost composure however ; and when asked by his terror-stricken partner why he could possibly be so much at ease, he immediately drew his sword, and pointed it threateningly at her bosom. She shrank not, but looked up with a sweet smile to the face of him whom she knew so well and trusted so entirely. “Are you not afraid,” he said, “with my sword at your breast?” “No indeed !” was her answer, “since it is in the hands of my husband.” “Neither am I afraid of the storm,” *was his response*, “for I know the love of Him

who rules amidst the tempest, and holds the waters of the ocean in the hollow of His hand."

Could the believer only realize the perfect love of Him who is the Almighty Husband of His people, peace would reign in the heart amidst the most painful and adverse providences. The revelation of Himself in this character is intended to assure us, that whatever a wife may expect from a husband full of true and deep affection, far more may the believer look for from Jesus. He counts the trusting soul as one with Himself; for by faith in Him, we become "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." He dwells in us also by His Spirit, and thus we are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

"All things are ours; whether the ministers of the gospel, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are ours," if we are His. In Him we possess a legal right to all, as a wife does to her husband's wealth on earth; and when our marriage with Him is thoroughly completed in heaven, we shall be sharers in His "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Meanwhile He says to every one who looks to Him for salvation, "I will never leave thee, I will never, *never*, NEVER forsake thee. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath *mercy on thee*" (Hebrews xiii. 5; Isaiah liv. 10).

Oh ! drooping, fainting one, who desirest above all things to be Christ's, let thy heart be revived by these heavenly consolations. May a wife trust her earthly husband, noble, generous, and true, because he has set his mind on her, and ever whispers fond his love ? Much more, infinitely more, mayest thou confidently lean on the bosom of thy heavenly Husband. He loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness has He drawn thee. Having led thee to choose Himself as thy portion, He has made thee His own, and can never cease to love. From nearest and dearest on earth death must part thee, but never from Jesus. He will make all things work together for the good of those, who claim from Him the fulfilment of all that is implied in the conjugal relation ; and when thou closest thine eyes on this world, thou wilt without delay behold thy Husband-king in his beauty, and taste the joys which are at His right hand for evermore. "The Lord shall then be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

EARTHLY ECHOES OF HEAVENLY LOVE

O EARTH, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord," was once the summons of a herald of heaven. And, indeed, the earth is ever listening and ready to give response. When "the God of glory thundereth," her mountain-peaks catch up the message, and from crag to crag the echo is repeated. When He calls to repose, she folds her hands, and sinks into the sleep of winter. When He kisses her bosom in the sunbeam of spring, she feels the thrill of His love, and bestirs herself to reciprocate. Speedily she robes herself in her mantle of green, bedecked with many and divers-coloured blossoms, each emulating its neighbour in showing forth the glory of Him at whose command they burst into being.

The lower animals are equally responsive. In the universal chorus, fallen, unrenewed man alone is dumb; or if he naturally echoes any utterance of his Maker, it is when conscience is aroused, and shudders at the thunders of the Almighty's wrath. To the still small voice of the heavenly charmer he is insensible, or positively inimical.

Let heart and ears be circumcised however, and the whisperings of love divine will be listened for, and echoed with delight. Every sound of tenderness, every word of pity, every syllable of yearning compassion, every declaration of affection from our God and Saviour will awaken a fitting response; and he, who alone on earth is capable of giving rational expression to the song of creation, will be heard exclaiming, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

In the revelation of Himself, there are no sweeter manifestations than those in which our God in Christ calls us to consider Him, as standing to us in the relation of Father, Mother, Brother, Bridegroom, and Husband. To these earthly relationships He refers us, so that we may thereby clearly understand something of His infinite and unspeakable goodness. And what responses does He expect to greet such marvellous condescension and grace? Certainly that each sinner to whom the message comes should accept His love, and become His child, His younger brother or sister, His bride, His wife. If we can form any correct idea of the spirit and conduct which should characterize true and faithful children, younger brothers or sisters, brides, and wives, in their connections here below, we shall be the better able to comprehend what are the earthly echoes, which should answer again to the love of heaven.

I. CHILDREN.

1. *Children delight in the presence of their parents.*— Even the babe, still mute, declares the truth of this remark. The outstretched hands, the pleading eye, perhaps the cry of sorrow when mother leaves the room, and the joyful look and the crow of gladness when she returns, tell how much her presence is desired. What sweet repose does the infant find as it rests on its mother's bosom, and looks up into those eyes beaming down with love! And bigger grown, how do children welcome the home-coming of their father after any absence, short or long! Who fix the easy-chair at the angle beside the fire which he prefers? Who arrange his slippers on the rug? Who place the stool for his loved feet to rest upon? Who hurry to the gate at the first sound of his footsteps? Who clasp his hands and knees with fondness, and, after receiving his embrace, usher him over the threshold with exuberant delight? Who cluster round his chair when his evening meal has been despatched, and by fond endearments lend such a refreshing glow to "the bonny blythe blink of his own fire-side?" Ah! you know it is those dear children, in whose breasts parental love has awakened the sweet echo of devoted filial affection, and who would feel home to be stripped of all that makes it home, were their beloved father and mother's *presence wanting at the hearth.*

Precisely so is it with the man who has realized the character of Him, who has revealed Himself as indeed both a father and mother to us. Even on earth the child of God feels that "in His presence is fulness of joy." How Moses craved for it!—"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." How David longed for it!—"As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." The thought, "Thou God seest me," is no longer a pain but a pleasure. To remember that the eye of the Omniscient is ever looking on, awakens no fear, if only the love of God's heart is truly known and believed.

Without doubt, even a loving child may become averse to face his earthly father and mother. Let him transgress some positive command, or do what he knows to be wrong, and he will shrink from those he loves most dearly, and values most highly of all in the world. By what means shall the former comfort be attained? Only by humiliation and confession before those whom he has dishonoured. Making a clean breast of his misdeed, and seeking forgiveness, he will speedily resume the old sweet position. Abased in his own sight he may and will be for his folly; but the forgiving love of his parents will endear their presence more than ever to his heart.

The parallel is not difficult to discover in the case of one, who has become a child of God by

faith in the Redeemer. If he fall into sin, he cannot approach with former alacrity the footstool of his Father in Christ ; but his refraining from prayer will only increase his misery. There is but one way to find repose, and that is, complete and unfeigned confession, with supplication for pardon. And truly God is a great forgiver. He delights to multiply pardons. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The more speedily we repair to Him the better. Unbosoming all before Him, we shall quickly be at rest on the arms of His love ; and every renewed expression of His infinite paternal regard will bind us more thoroughly to His sway, and make us mourn in sadness when we cannot realize the light of His countenance.

2. *Children confide in their parents' love, and appeal to them for help in time of need.*—Every person who has had a good father and mother could give a thousand instances illustrative of this truth. Under the little crosses and trials of infancy and early childhood, where do we flee for succour but to a mother's soothing tenderness, or a father's ready embrace ? And when the battle of life becomes more fierce and stern, and we meet with disappointments and defeats, with baffling winds and counter currents, where do we find deeper sympathy and heartier assistance than from the earthly authors of our being ?

Ah ! my friends, whoever has come to under-

stand and believe the love that God hath to us, will run to Him with his sorrows, even more readily than to an earthly father and mother. Our Father in Jesus has a far more loving heart to feel, and a far more powerful arm to outstretch, on our behalf. Before Him we can pour out our griefs, and unveil all our vexation and anxiety; and to Him we can confidently look for the support and the help which He has promised to bestow.

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother, of one who had not.

"Mother told me who to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus; He was my mother's friend, and He is mine."

"Jesus Christ is up in the sky; He is a long way off, and has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you."

"I do not know anything about that," said the orphan; "all I know is, He says He will, and that's enough for me."

The lesson which this child-believer had learned so completely, is one well understood by all who have become reconciled to God. Knowing that He careth for them, they cast all their care on Him. The heavier the burden, the more resolutely do they appeal to Him; and thus, "the peace that passeth all understanding keeps their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

3. *True children willingly abandon whatever gives pain to their parents.*—Companions and pursuits that father and mother deem unsuitable, they will heartily forsake; and even pure pleasures they will sacrifice, if they cannot retain them without causing suffering to those whom they feel bound to honour with the tenderest consideration.

A little boy had a pretty singing-bird on which his heart was greatly set. His mother fell ill. The low nervous fever by which she was prostrated rendered the notes of the bird peculiarly distressing to her. Love to her child led her to hide her suffering as far as possible; but the boy discovered, that what so delighted him caused much anguish to his beloved mother. Without any direct request, and without a moment's hesitation, he carried off the cage and its tenant, and presented both to a friend a few houses off. Returning to his mother's bedside, he told her the canary would no longer disturb her, for he had given it away; and when she asked how he could part with what he liked so much, he replied, "I loved the canary, mother, but I love you more. I could not wish to keep anything that gave you pain. It would not be true love if I did."

Sin has its pleasures, and Satan knows well how to bait his hooks with them. The enjoyment of God's love, however, renders it *comparatively* easy to sacrifice whatever would grieve Him. God's children feel that "His love is better

than wine,"—that one drop from the river of the water of life is better than all the streams of earth, whether poisoned or pure. With the least indication, therefore, of their Father's will, they readily comply, and will cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, if needful to please Him.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15).

4. *True children love to obey their parents.*—Let a command be given, and it will be complied with at whatever cost. Take an example :—

A gentleman resident in London, having some business to transact one morning at the India House, took with him his son Richard, then only six or seven years of age. The boy was left at one of the outer doors, with instructions to wait till his father came for him. Having been detained within for some time, the father, under the pressure of his engagements, forgot his son, and left the building by another door. When he got home in the evening, the first inquiry of his wife was about the missing child, and then the father recollected all. He returned at once to the India House, and the obedient boy was found where he had been told to wait. He had kept to his post for the livelong day, for he could not disappoint his father. The promise of his youth was not belied in riper years, and the far-reaching influence for good of the Rev. Richard Cecil

proved, that on his head had descended the blessing promised to keepers of the Fifth Commandment.

Unless we thus love to do His pleasure, we cannot be the children of God. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Such is the record of David's feelings towards his Father in heaven; and all true followers of the Lamb have the same desire and aim. Let them only be satisfied that God has given the direction, and they will strive to obey; His love constrains them. This is the secret of their hearty zeal in fulfilling His behests. "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."

The thought that their parents will be grieved by their evil-doing is more powerful than the dread of punishment, to keep true children from disobedience, or to bring them speedily to repentance when they have done wrong.

"A boy was once tempted by some of his companions, to pluck ripe cherries from a tree which his father had forbidden him to touch. 'You need not be afraid,' said one of his companions, 'for if your father should find out that you had taken them, he is so kind he would not whip you.' 'That is the very reason,' replied the boy, 'why I would not touch them. It is true my father would not chastise me; yet my disobedience, I

know, would hurt my father, and that would be worse to me than anything else.' ”

Many years ago I knew a young man who had a very loving mother. He had a strong self-will, and a high temper then little under control. His mother desired him to do something against his inclinations, but very needful for the comfort of the household. He answered harshly that he would do no such thing, and hasted to leave the room, in great wrath because of the request that had been made. On his way to the door, he had to pass his mother. To his impertinent language she had answered not a word, but he caught a glimpse of tears filling her eyes, and trickling down her cheeks. Oh, these tears! They burned in his conscience more than molten iron could the flesh. The memory of all her long-continued and tender loving-kindnesses added to his bitterness of soul. The pride of his foolish heart for hours resisted the idea of humiliation; but wiser and better suggestions prevailed. The tears of his mother conquered the stubborn spirit; and the young man recovered peace again, only when he had confessed his fault, and found his mother's arms extended to embrace him. A ready pardon brought him more than ever under her control, and the remembrance of it helped him in future to do her bidding.

The same principle rules in the family of God. The doctrines of free grace are often spoken of reproachfully by the ignorant, as if free and full

forgiveness of sins gave license to our lusts. The fact is the very reverse. No sooner is pardoning love realized, than the question is heard from the ransomed child, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And if any Peter should be induced to deny his Master, one look of the face of Him who has been wounded by the transgression will lead the delinquent to weep bitterly, and to rest not till he has sought and found a renewed experience of pardon. Whoever can, wilfully and persistently, indulge in what is grievous to our Father in Jesus is assuredly no child of God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that loveth me not," said Christ, "keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

5. *True children are trustful and submissive.*— They may not be able to comprehend the reasons for many things, but they learn to confide in the wisdom and love of their father and mother. Resting in the belief that they cannot minister aught but what is good, their offspring will not hesitate to swallow the bitterest potion they present; and if anything, seemingly agreeable, is withheld, their children will be content to do without it. Enough for them if their parents are supervising all.

The whole family of God strive to follow their

Elder Brother, in trustful submission to their Father's pleasure. "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. Not my will, but thine, be done." They have fathomed somewhat the infinite love of His heart, the infinite wisdom which guides His hand; and, having His promise that "all things shall work together for their welfare," they not only refrain from murmuring, but aim at rejoicing acquiescence.

Dr. Payson was once asked if he saw any special reasons for some particular dispensation of Providence. "No," was his reply; "but *I am as well satisfied as if I could see a thousand.* God's will is the very perfection of reason."

A gentleman of fortune was stripped of all his means, by a series of calamitous events beyond his own control. He sold his estate to pay his creditors, and removed to a distant part of the country, where he rented a small cottage, and endeavoured to win a maintenance for his wife and himself, by labouring in the fields of a neighbouring farmer. An old acquaintance sought him out. He found his friend busy digging in a clay pit, toiling on as if, from his youth, labour had been his wont. Expressing surprise and sorrow at finding one, who had been nursed in the lap of luxury, so painfully circumstanced, the reduced gentleman looked up to his friend's face, and said with a smile, as he pointed his finger to heaven—

"'Tis He ordains our daily lot,
And He does all things well."

It was the same child-like trust which made old Nancy so happy. She is described as having lived alone in a poor little cottage, without money, without relations, and as being half blind, quite lame, and very crooked. When asked the reason of her happiness, she replied, "Perhaps it's because I haven't got anybody but God. You see, rich folks like you depend upon their families and their houses; they've got to thinking of their business, of their wives and children, and then they're always mighty afraid of troubles ahead. I ain't got anything to trouble myself about, you see, 'cause I leave it all to the Lord, and the Lord takes care of me."

I have heard of one long-tried Christian who, in her last hours, was left without the cheering light of God's countenance, which she had often before enjoyed. Some watchers around her bed expressed much surprise, that she should be willing to die while heavenly comforts were withheld. "What!" replied the daughter of God; "shall I not trust my Father to put me to bed in the dark?"

Some may perhaps feel dispirited, because they have not yet attained to such perfect resignation. Let them remember the case of the boy, who, having a sparrow which died, was grieved to the heart, and wept much, because he felt he could not truly say "Thy will be done," when he knelt before his Father in heaven. He was a true child, else he had not been grieved at the rebelliousness *of his nature*. Seeking the grace of submission,

he overcame at length ; and if we seek, we shall also find.

6. *Children resemble their parents and copy their example.*—In some children the family likeness is very marked, so that those who know the father and mother can at once discover the resemblance in their offspring. In all children, I believe, that those features in which they resemble their parents, are more and more developed as they advance in life. This may be accounted for, to some extent, from the faculty which most persons possess, of unconsciously copying those whom they love and admire, in speech, in expression of countenance, and in manners. The propensity in children to imitate their parents has become universally proverbial.

An interesting example of this tendency has been narrated in connexion with the Eddystone Lighthouse. A band of wreckers, hungry for prey, went out to the lighthouse one winter afternoon, and forcibly carried to the mainland the keeper and his wife, whom they had determined to retain during the night. They calculated that thus no warning light would beam from the tower, and that not a few vessels would therefore be cast ashore, from which they would reap much plunder. Their expectations were completely disappointed. Two little children that had been left behind, finding that their parents did not return, and that darkness was fast enveloping the earth, hastened to do what they had so regularly seen their father perform. Climbing to the top, they lighted the

lamps carefully, and did all that was needful to make the beacon effective for its office. No wreck occurred during that eventful night. The force of parental example, acting on the minds of the lonely children, prevented any disastrous results.

God's children are like their Father, though some bear the family features more manifestly than others. All of them, however, grow into the wished-for likeness. Contemplating their heavenly Parent in the person of Jesus, "the express image" of the Father, they are so attracted by His infinite excellencies, as to long for likeness to Him, both in character and in daily life. "Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And their endeavours to imitate the words and deeds of Him who is "one with the Father," instrumentally promote the approximation of their spiritual features, to those of the Fountain-head of all holy beauty.

"Love your enemies," said Christ; "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye *may be* (literally, *may become*) the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Giving and forgiving are the great outcomings of the love of God in this fallen world. He calls us, in

the words just quoted, to imitate Himself in these ; and as we strive to copy His example, we shall become every day liker Him, whose dear children we are through faith in Jesus. Our imitation will also enable us to understand Him more fully, in his relation to ourselves. As we *give and forgive*, we shall be the better able to appreciate the fullness and freeness of the grace of Him, who has so lovingly made us His sons and daughters.

Have you, my readers, been reconciled to God ? Have you yet "known and believed the love He hath to us" rebellious sinners, and gone by Christ, the living way, to claim Him as your Father ? If indeed it is so, you now delight in His presence, you cast all your care on Him, you abandon all that would grieve Him, you love to do His bidding, you are submissive to His providence, you are striving to copy His example, while you long for the day when you shall be perfectly conformed to his image. "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you" all that you desire, and a glorious kingdom besides. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

But are not some among you, my readers, still possessed with an evil heart of unbelief, and de-

parting from the living God ? “Hear, O heavens ; and give ear, O earth ; for the Lord hath spoken ; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.” Where can such a course conduct you, but to the blackness of darkness for ever ? And will you go down to the pit from the very gates of heaven ? To you the word of salvation has been sent. Still the voice of your dishonoured Father in heaven is heard proclaiming, “Turn ye, turn ye ; why will ye die ? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Flee, then, for refuge to the Saviour. You shall be at once accepted through God’s beloved Son, and become reconciled children. “And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”

II. YOUNGER BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

1. *The younger branches of a family cannot help confiding in a wise and good elder brother.*—His influence is second only to that of the parents. His loving consideration and care render his company ever a source of happiness to the juniors. His brothers will talk over their schemes and plans with him ; his sisters will cling to him with all the ardour of womanly love, and count that their “dower is but their brother’s heart.” As the elder brother lives so much for them, the younger

branches will esteem it a privilege and a joy to do anything in their power for him. His likings will become largely their likings, and they will thus be gently drawn away from whatever is disagreeable to him. And should his health fail, or adversity of any kind cross his path, brothers and sisters will gather round, with heartfelt sympathy, to minister consolation, or, if possible, ward off whatever would harm.

I have before my mind special cases, in which a truly pious elder brother has been peculiarly blessed, in drawing the younger branches after him into the narrow way. And if I could find fitting terms, I could tell how much an elder brother's love has been returned by the juniors of the household. I have known younger brothers, who would sacrifice their own interests to gratify him, whom they looked up to as a sort of second father, and who would labour night and day ungrudgingly, to help forward any business in which he was engaged. Sisters, too, I could point out, to whom their worthy elder brother's will is a law ; who watch for the slightest indication of his leanings and desires, that they may carry them into effect ; who find the purest delight in giving him any gratification ; who rejoice in his prosperity, and nurse him in sickness, with all the assiduity and tenderness of a very mother.

The parallel holds good in the family of God. To Jesus the Elder Brother all eyes and hearts are turned. The offering up of Himself for them

binds them for ever to His person and His service ; and they cannot help living for Him, who lived, and suffered, and died, in this world of sin and sorrow, on their behalf, and sits in their nature for ever on the Father's right hand, ordering all things for their welfare.

Among Christ's younger brothers, John is eminent for the warmth of his affection, but Paul, perhaps, leads the van for ardent love to Jesus, and indefatigable zeal in His cause. What would not he dare, or do, or suffer, under the all-constraining influence of the love of Jesus ? " Thrice," says he, " was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Even when he was conscious that distress was before him, he would not shrink. You remember his noble declaration at Miletus to the elders from Ephesus :—" And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there ; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me ; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish

my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

And if you ask for patterns of sisterly devotion to the person and cause of Jesus, you will find them in those women who followed Him in His preaching tours, and ministered to Him of their substance; who anointed Him for His burial; who clung to Him during the awful scene on Calvary, with a courage and endurance which put apostles to the blush; who yearned over His dead body with a sadness, which nought but His re-appearance in life could dispel; and who, when He had risen, "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring the disciples word." You will find them too in "those women which laboured with Paul in the gospel;" and in that ardent and loving spirit of whom the same apostle writes: "I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

2. *In every rightly constituted family, the natural affection which is observable in the first-born, is developed betimes in all who are younger; they love, as he loves, all within the family circle.*

I have already referred in a previous part of this paper to the love of children for their parents. Let me here, however, first say a few words about devotion to a mother, and see how the parallel holds in the household of God.

A few years ago there was a family, of whom I had occasion to hear, resident in one of the streets of our city which run towards the river. The father took ill and died ; and the household was left almost destitute. The mother struggled on as best she could ; but a naturally weak constitution, overburdened and miserably nourished, could not long endure. Symptoms of early dissolution were soon too manifest, though assistance reached the widow from willing hands and hearts. One morning some neighbours looked in. The children had thought their mother to be asleep, but it was the sleep of death. A little boy of seven or eight years of age, on being questioned, explained that the previous night, he and the rest were gathered round the little bit of fire. Their mother was lying on their only bed. She complained of her feet being very cold ; and this little son crept in beside her, and baring his bosom, pressed it up against his mother's feet, in an anxious but vain effort to warm them. He had fallen asleep with his mother's feet resting on his breast. She never moved again ; and the poor orphan, so full of love, so willing to do what he could, was overwhelmed when he found that the coldness of his mother's body was indeed the chill of death.

What a wondrous outcome of the love of Christ for *His* mother have we in John's simple outline of the incident, which occurred while our Lord was in the very agonies of death :—"Now there stood *by the cross* of Jesus his mother, and his mother's

sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son ! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

On this occasion our Elder Brother gave a lesson for all times. It is not only that we must love and cherish our own mothers ; but that every disciple must, and will be, heartily ready to aid and nourish the mother of Jesus. And who or where, you ask, is she, that we may do His bidding ? The answer is to be found in Christ's own words, " Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and *mother*."

I take it, then, that every woman advanced in life, and who is a true follower of Jesus, we are to honour and esteem as " Christ's mother ;" and if she is in need, we are to minister to her as may be in our power. So thought a Christian merchant, into whose counting-house there was one day ushered an elderly female, clad in widow's garb. He was very busy, but he asked her to be seated, though she was quite unknown to him. She apologized for taking up his time, and told him she had come only for sympathy and advice, in certain serious troubles which had overtaken her. Her language made it speedily plain that " one was her Master, even Christ." The merchant as

quickly settled what was *his* duty to this mother in Israel. He knew well how the Lord Jesus would have received such an application. Though at considerable inconvenience, he laid aside his own affairs, listened patiently to the narrative of the widow, spoke words of heavenly consolation and encouragement, and to her great gratification undertook himself the labour of getting her affairs comfortably arranged.

Right-minded brothers will naturally care for their sisters. I have read of a couple of French children suddenly left orphans—the boy only thirteen, and the girl a few years younger—which prettily illustrates this. The girl, Lucille Romee, had not strength or opportunity to win anything for her maintenance; but her brave brother, James, exerted himself to find some suitable employment. Ere long he fell in with a place as an apprentice to an artizán, where he was lodged, fed, and clothed, and got twenty francs (16s. 8d. sterling) a month of wages. The whole of the money he devoted to his sister, and was rejoiced beyond measure when he discovered a good woman, who, for the twenty francs, agreed to take care of little Lucille, and teach her needlework.

Of a sister's care for a brother and for the rest of the family circle, there is not a more admirable example than that of Grisell Hume, eldest daughter of Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, and *who* afterwards became Lady Baillie of Jervis-*wooda*. Her father had become obnoxious to the

persecuting Government of Charles II., and to escape arrestment took refuge, in 1683, in the family burying-vault in Polwarth churchyard. He hid there for some months; and though but eighteen years of age, Grisell alone carried him food regularly at midnight, in spite of the dreariness of the city of the dead. It was needful, however, to change the hiding-place. Grisell and James Winter, a faithful servant of the family, scraped out the earth with their hands, so as to form a hollow place below a drawing-out bed, in a room of which Lady Hume kept the key. At the completion of the work not a nail was left on Grisell's hands. Sir Patrick was soon driven by water from this gravelike receptacle; and making his way in disguise to London, he contrived to escape to Holland. All his estates were then confiscated; but, through some influence she was in a position to employ, Lady Hume obtained a small pension from the Government. Shortly thereafter she joined her husband on the Continent. The strictest economy was necessary, as there were many children. Only one little maid could be hired to assist in scullery work, and all the rest of the household duties fell on Grisell. She made the markets; she went to the mill with corn to have it ground, as all good managers do in Holland; she acted as cook, and house and laundry maid; she made and mended the children's clothes; and, in short, bore the burden of the family cares, so as to relieve her mother, who

was much taken up with the youngest branches of the household. Every morning at six o'clock Grisell lighted her father's fire, gave him some warm refreshment, wakened and dressed the younger children, and brought them in to get their lessons. Their parents were the only teachers they had, as money was wanting to meet the payment of school fees. Her brother Patrick became a private soldier in the bodyguard of the Prince of Orange, the same who shortly thereafter was crowned King of England. In those days it was the fashion for gentlemen to wear cravats and cuffs of point-lace. Grisell, who was always peculiarly tidy in her own dress, felt an honest pride in seeing her brother neat and clean in his; and she sat up many a night, in order that Patrick's linens and laces might be kept in as good order as any nobleman's in the city. Well indeed did such a daughter and such a sister deserve the commendation, which she received from her mother just before her decease in 1703. Grisell was standing weeping behind the curtains of the bed. When farewells had been spoken to the rest, her mother called for Grisell, and said, "My dear Grisell, blessed be you above all, for a helpful child have you been to me."

There is no reason to doubt that Grisell Hume sought also the spiritual welfare of her brothers and sisters. Every true Christian, even the *youngest*, does. Some little time ago the child of a mechanic in this city, while only seven years

of age, tasted the love of Jesus, and surrendered her heart to Him. She slept with some elder sisters in a kitchen bed. One morning before dawn the elder girls awoke, and missed the little thing that had lain down beside them. They rose to seek her ; and hearing a low voice in a closet off the kitchen, they drew near to hearken. It was their own bedfellow. She knew that these elder sisters loved not the Saviour. She had lain awake thinking of their danger, and was constrained by her regard for them, to rise and pray that they might be soon brought to understand the preciousness of Christ. Truly, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise."

If the affection which subsists between the members in every rightly constituted family is great, not less is that which exists, or ought to exist, among those who are brothers and sisters in the household of faith. Begotten of the same Father, redeemed by the same Elder Brother, temples of the same Divine Spirit, cheered by the same promises, travelling by the same highway to the same happy home in heaven, they are united by bonds closer far than those of mere natural relationship. They therefore bear each other's burdens, soothe each other's sorrows, and help one another onwards and upwards in the narrow path. Their rule of life embodies the precept, enforced by the example of the Elder Brother :—"Love one another, as I have loved

you." Never, indeed, can their love equal His; but it may resemble it, as one drop of water does an ocean. Jesus endured for our sakes the contradiction of sinners against Himself; and we ought to be long-suffering and kind. Jesus looked not to His own ease and comfort, but unselfishly "bare our sins in His own body on the tree;" and we should "look, not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Jesus "laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Examples of this loving devotion to the members of Christ's body are not far to seek. You behold it among the Pentecostal converts, of whom we read that "the multitude of them were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." You find it in Dorcas, that woman who "was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did;" in Lydia, who so lovingly insisted on entertaining Paul and the other brethren in her house; and in those widows who are described as having "lodged strangers, washed the saints' feet, relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work." And, not to be too tedious, you discover it in the practice of Paul himself, who says to the Colossian converts, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church."

If, then, the glorious Elder Brother in the family of God has been received by you as your chief beloved Friend, your devoted adherence to Himself and His purposes will be unmistakeably manifest. As He gave Himself for you, you will daily consecrate yourselves to Him and His service. Every mother and brother and sister in Christ will have a place in your heart; and while you do good to all as you have opportunity, you will specially watch for the welfare of the household of God. The apostle of love declares that "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" but he takes care to explain that it must not be mere "love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." In another passage he announces that "by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." The two loves are like the two sides of the same coin. If we really love our God in Christ, we will truly love all the brethren and sisters in God's family; and if we have no abiding and active affection for fellow-believers around us, it is clear a profession of love to God is, on our part, nothing but a sham. If we are growing in love to the Elder Brother, we will be proportionately increasing in our love to every follower of the Lamb. The nearer to Christ, the nearer and dearer are Christians to each other.

O that again we might see such times on earth as existed in the early days of the Church! Then the affection of God's family towards each other

was proverbial. Enemies of the truth were constrained to exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another!"

Father in heaven, give answer now to our Elder Brother's supplication! "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

III. THE BRIDE.

1. *The bridegroom is all the world to the bride.*—If her mind is as it ought to be, there is not another on earth, in her estimation, comparable to him to whom she has plighted her troth. Whatever defects he has will be overlooked, while his personal beauties, and his mental and moral excellencies, will be magnified in her eyes. If her bridegroom is at all worthy, this is quite as it ought to be; though often, alas! does closer converse dispel the fond illusion. Earthly love is proverbially blind; and when experience unscales the eyes, the revelation of the reality frequently gives a dreadful shock.

No such sad discovery is ever in store for her who has yielded her heart to the heavenly Bridegroom. The better He is known, the more will *He be admired* and loved. Never on earth or in *heaven can we fully comprehend all His excellency,*

for it is infinite. No wonder then that the bride can see none like Christ. No wonder that, as she catches a glimpse of His face, she becomes "sick of love." No wonder that she calls Him "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," and that no sound is so sweet in her ears as the "voice of her beloved."

There is one thing which specially intensifies the bride's love to Jesus,—the thought that ever He should have set His heart on her. She feels herself black indeed by nature and by practice,—*"a guilty, weak, and worthless worm"*—deserving only of wrath. And when she remembers at what a cost He purchased her freedom from condemnation—with what labour He wrought a robe of righteousness in which to dress her—what a throne it is on which He has promised to set her at last—she is dumb with astonishment. Her amazement is only increased, as she recalls how she was alarmed at His first approaches; how she fled from His offered embrace to the company of His despisers; how she scouted His endearments, and wished to be left alone to perish. Never will she forget the hour when the Prince of Peace overtook her, and constrained her to listen to His words of love; when He opened her eyes, and unveiled His beauty before her. And then when she, poor, needy sinner, heard His tender pleading, *"I would now betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I would betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in*

mercies. I would even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness ; and thou shalt know the Lord," what could she do but answer, " Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me."

2. *A halo of glory ever encircles, to the eyes of lovers, the locality of their betrothal, and those trysting-places where they have met and communed.*—And where will a bride hasten with greater alacrity, than to the spot where she is appointed to meet him to whom she is engaged ?

In the spiritual betrothal the same holds true. The quiet closet, the bright fireside, the lonely moorland, the Sabbath-class, the prayer-meeting, or the church pew, where we were made to feel with heavenly power the love of the Saviour, and sweetly constrained to yield to Him, will *never* be forgotten. Spots where new love-tokens were vouchsafed will be peculiarly dear ; and if the heart is right, we will not be slack in seeking our Bridegroom where He has fixed a meeting. Should He seem to be withdrawing, His bride will pursue him with eager desire. His absence will but "make her heart grow fonder." She will rest, however, only when she realizes the presence of Him whom her soul loveth : and when He is found, she will "hold Him, and not let Him go."

3. *A truly loving bride will study to please her lover.*—In her attire she will try to gratify his *taste* ; in her behaviour and company she will *conform heartily* to his wishes. The season, however,

for which she specially longs, and towards which all her plans are made to point, is the day of her marriage. What arrangements and re-arrangements ! what meditations and consultations ! what laborious but joyful preparations for the hour when she is to be called "wife !"

Without doubt it is the same with the bride of Christ. His will is her law ; not because she *must*, but because she lives only in His smile. An approving glance from Him, and she heeds not the scorn of a world. She will sacrifice her dearest attachments if they are not agreeable to Him. To be what He desires is her unceasing aim ; and toil and struggle she thinks lightly of, in her efforts to be ready against the glorious nuptial day. The garment she loves best to wear is the robe of His righteousness ; but evermore she seeks His Spirit to purify her within, so that in the temple of her heart, nothing may remain to offend the eye of Him who sits there enshrined, as "all her salvation and all her desire."

Who among my readers has been truly betrothed to the Lord Jesus ? Only that one who can honestly say, "Whom have I in heaven but Christ ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Him." O let us not deceive ourselves ! We may not be able to point out the time and place where first we experienced the drawings of His grace, and felt a wish to be His, nor is this indispensable ; but assuredly if we are His, we

will be able to speak of seasons when we have felt Him near, when we have tasted the sweetness of His love. And are we carefully studying how to honour and glorify Him, by fulfilling the slightest indications of His will? Are we "looking for and hasting unto" the day, when He will call us to His house and home on high? Are we preparing daily for going in with Him unto the marriage? If so, we shall not be ashamed at His coming.

We shall be brought with gladness great,
And mirth on every side,
Into the palace of the King,
And there we shall abide.

IV. THE WIFE.

The bride and the wife have much in common. The bride is like the corn in the sheath-blade; the wife like the full corn in the ear. In the latter there is a fuller development of what existed in the former. In regard to the wife, I proceed to notice a few points, avoiding repetition as far as may be practicable or desirable:—

1. *Every true wife glories in being called by the name of her husband, and is not ashamed to be indebted to him for all she needs.*—The result of marriage-union is that the woman loses her individuality. She becomes one with her husband in the eye of the law, as she was and is one with him in heart-affection. Since he is himself alto-

gether her own, all that belongs to him is hers to minister supply for her every requirement. He yields his property to her use with no ungrudging spirit ; she receives and employs it as rightfully her own. No secret hoard does she keep, hidden away under apprehension of a change in his feelings. She rests evermore with confidence on his fervent and unchanging love.

The wife of the heavenly Husband has more reason still, to delight herself in the All-gracious One to whom she has been united, by a bond that shall never be broken. Having yielded herself up to the Saviour, and accepted Him as He offered Himself, they are no more twain. In the eye of the law of God she is considered only as in Christ. His name is named upon her. In the twenty-third chapter of Jeremiah He is designated "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;" and in the thirty-third chapter of the same prophecy, the Lamb's wife has the identically same name applied to herself. And since her kinsman-Redeemer has become her Husband, all His possessions are hers, and she needs them. Isaiah speaks of seven women taking hold of one man, and saying, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel ; only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach." The Lamb's wife has no such ideas of her own wealth. Before she consented to be Christ's, she had discovered that her condition was hopeless—that she was "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked."

Every subsequent day's experience has deepened the impression, that by nature she has nothing which she can truly call her own save sin. Therefore clings she to her Husband, that in Him she may be forgiven and accepted at the throne of God, and receive out of His fulness every day all requisite supplies of grace. Whatever is best for her on her homeward journey will be certainly supplied, for has not her Husband promised? All things are hers indeed, for she is Christ's beloved.

When a loving marriage union has subsisted for years, it is frequently observed that there is an assimilation between the pair. Probably mutual admiration leads to mutual imitation; but generally the stronger character, if love is rich and full on both sides, will be impressed on the weaker.

Between Christ and His people the same process goes on; but as He can receive no elevation of character from them, the benefit is all on one side. They go up through the wilderness leaning on Him, their best beloved; and by their constant communing with Him, they grow insensibly into His likeness. The higher their admiration and the more fervent their love, the more speedily will they approximate to Him who is the perfection of beauty.

2. *A true wife is ever devoted and obedient to her husband.*—The husband is the head of the wife, *not to enslave and crush, but to nourish and cherish and bless her.* As he rules in tenderest

love, she delights to do his pleasure from the sweetest and purest affection. If he has faults, she will prudently hide them from strangers. Her household arrangements will all be made with a view to his comfort ; and *his* credit and honour she will esteem as indeed *her* own. His means she will lay out according to his request, economizing when he wishes the fragments to be gathered, and dispersing with liberal hand when he gives the order. Her own personal advantage she will heartily sacrifice on the altar of devotion to her husband, and to the work he may have in hand ; being ever most highly satisfied, when she can show how earnestly she desires to be a true helpmeet, to the man who has won her heart.

Sarah was a beautiful example of loving devotion in a wife. Peter notices in his first Epistle how she honoured her husband in calling him lord ; and we cannot study her biography without coming to the conclusion, that it was her constant aim in all things to fulfil the wishes of Abraham.

When the Rev. William Jay of Bath had been fifty years a minister, he was presented by the ladies of his congregation with a purse containing £650. After a few words in reply to the remarks of the friend who had tendered the gift, he turned to Mrs. Jay, who was sitting beside him, and said :—" I take this purse, and present it to you, madam—to you, madam, who have always kept my purse, and therefore it is that it has been kept so well. Consider it entirely sacred—for your

pleasure, your use, your service, your comfort. I feel this to be unexpected by you, but it is perfectly deserved. Mr. Chairman and Christian friends, I am sure there is not one here but would acquiesce in this, if he knew the value of this woman, as a wife, for more than fifty years. I must mention the obligation the public are under to her (if I have been enabled to serve my generation), and how much she has raised her sex in my estimation; how much my Church and congregation owe to her watchings over their pastor's health, whom she has cheered under all his trials, and reminded of his duties, while she animated him in their performance; how often has she wiped the evening dew from his forehead, and freed him from interruptions and embarrassments, that he might be free for his work. How much also do my family owe to her; and what reason have they to call her blessed! She is, too, the mother of another mother in America, who has reared thirteen children, all of whom are walking with her in the way everlasting."

Mr. Griffin, once a minister in Portsea, has related an admirable example of devotion on the part of his wife. "I had received," he says, "an invitation to leave Portsea for a charge in another part of England. And among other considerations offered, which they thought might induce me to view my removal from Portsea as the leading of Providence, they mentioned having heard that the air of the place was prejudicial to Mrs.

Griffin, who was in a precarious state of health, and that the change of air would be likely to suit her better. This I felt extremely kind. The exchange would also have been an advantage to me in a pecuniary sense. I had, however, no wish myself to remove from a people I loved, and to whom I believed God had sent me, and was making my labours useful. I mentioned the subject to Mrs. Griffin when we were alone. She started, and began to weep, saying, 'O my dear, do you suppose for a moment that I could consent that *my* health, or even *my* life, should influence *you* in your ministerial work, and remove you from a place where God is owning your labours, and seems to have much for you to do? O no!' continued she, '*let me die here.* I can bear that; but if you go on *my* account, I know I shall die in distress; for all my future trials I shall view as judgments, and this will soon kill me. But let me stay here, and I will resign myself into the hands of my heavenly Father.' My heart," adds Mr. Griffin, "was indeed comforted at the manifestation of such a spirit, and my course at once decided on. We did commit ourselves to our God, who was gracious to us, and spared my dear wife to become the mother of eleven children."

The loving devotion of these three noble women to their earthly husbands was none the less, but all the greater, because the heavenly Husband was set on the throne of their hearts. In no bosom is earthly love so deep and pure and lasting, as in

that where Christ reigns supreme. The higher love quickens while it regulates the lower.

If union to Christ is complete, the Christian will be to Him as devoted and obedient as wife to husband. His authority will be recognised in every department of life. His pleasure will be consulted in every arrangement. Money will be *laid up* or *laid out* as He may direct. The advancement of His glory will be the chief end of existence here; and no toil will be too severe, no self-denial too great, if only the cause is advanced on which the mind of the Husband-king is set.

3. *A true wife keeps nothing secret from her husband.*—A lady friend of mine on one occasion called on another married lady, in the genteeler quarters of the city in which they dwelt. In the course of conversation the mistress of the house remarked, that her husband had that morning asked to have the check-key, so that he might himself open the outer door. "And what did you say?" asked my acquaintance. "I told him he had no use for it. What were the servants for, but to open the door when he should ring the bell?" My lady friend was rather surprised, and asked, with amazement in her tone, "And you did not give him the key when he wished it?" "No indeed!" answered the mistress of the house. "He might have come in suddenly, and found me doing something he did not want me to do."

In this instance the marriage union was, on the part of the woman, woefully incomplete; and

nothing but vexation to both husband and wife could be expected to result. Clandestine proceedings are at all times disagreeable. Ever liable to exposure, they keep the mind of the perpetrator in a ferment of anxiety, or the continual acting of a lie sears the conscience and hardens the heart. Especially is this the case, when a wife stoops to deceive her husband or hide her transactions from him. No true wife but will desire, as far as her husband is concerned, to have her life, as the old Roman desired to have his house, completely exposed to view, and with windows on every side, so that nothing might ever be covered from inspection. And certainly, if the married are to enjoy a perpetual honeymoon, there must be the utmost openness and candour on both sides. When anything is purposely hidden, it is so either because it is wrong, or because the love of that partner in life from whom the matter is concealed is doubted. If it be evil, it should not be done on any account; but if it be kept secret because love on the other side is questioned, it is a proof that the clandestine worker has already fallen far from having the loving confidence, which should ever mutually characterize those who are "one flesh."

The true wife of the Lord Jesus will have no secrets which she keeps from Him. She knows very well that nothing can be concealed from His all-seeing eyes; but trusting her Husband implicitly, she would not hide anything though

she could. She comes, therefore, constantly to His feet, and with Hannah, and David, and Jeremiah, "pours out her heart before Him." She lays bare her sins of thought, and word, and deed, that her iniquity may be forgiven and purged. She exposes the roots of bitterness which she discovers within her, that the Husbandman's skill may pull them up, or otherwise destroy them. She tells her sorrows and anxieties, great and small, "casting *all* her care" on her Lord, that He may uphold her under the burden, and remove it when it pleases Him. She beseeches Him to "search her, and know her heart; to try her and know her thoughts; to see if there be any wicked way in her, and to lead her in the way everlasting." Realizing constantly her needs, and trusting unreservedly in His declared and unchanging love, and ability to supply all her wants, she approaches Him continually with all the simplicity of a little child. Such faith as this is what His heart desires, and such faith it is that commands the blessing. When the eye is thus single, the whole body is full of light. Duplicity is certain to raise clouds between the soul and Christ; but artlessness and freedom from double dealing keep the atmosphere clear, for the transmission of the beams of light and love. The Husband-king cannot but "kiss with the kisses of His mouth" the dear wife, who proves her confidence and love by frankly disclosing everything to Him, and appealing for the supply of all her wants.

4. *The true wife is lonely in her husband's absence, and is thrilled with joy at his return.*—Dismal is the world in the absence of the sun, and doleful is the heart of the woman whose husband is long and far away. The more intense her love, the more distressing is the deprivation of his presence. Surrounded by other friends, and satiated with luxury she may be; but in the midst of all she will feel a painful emptiness, which nought can fill but the return of the object loved. Bound to him indeed she feels herself, by an unseen yet unbreakable tie; but though he is assuredly her own, her eye longs to behold and her spirit to commune with him. What a change is wrought by tidings of his intended and speedy return, and how the days and hours and minutes will be counted, till she is received again to the embrace of her husband! In view of that happy day, what preparations will be made within and without the dwelling! Every partiality of him she loves will his wife consider and provide for; and joy will reign again in the house, when the long-absent master returns and takes possession.

Nowhere are the feelings of a true wife on the arrival of her husband, after long absence, more beautifully depicted than in a well-known Scottish song. You will remember how, at first, she almost thinks the news too good to be true; and when satisfied that indeed he is at hand, what great but rapid preparations are made; and all "to please her ain gudeman, for he's been lang awa.'

Then follows the admirable stanza, which tells the gushing and almost tearful gladness of her heart, and which never fails to awaken in my mind, as I recall the lines, a peculiar and sympathetic thrill :—

“Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like caller air ;
His very foot has music in 't,
As he comes up the stair.
And will I see his face again ?
And will I hear him speak ?
I 'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,—
In troth, I 'm like to greet.”

The Husband of the Church and of every true believer is ever near, and yet far away. This is one of the paradoxes of Christianity, which it is easy, however, to explain. As God, he is spiritually present everywhere ; but His manhood has been received into heaven, until the times of the restitution of all things. His wife is bound to Him by a tie that cannot be severed. His love has constrained her to yield herself, soul, body, and spirit, to Him ; and since she has answered thus His call, she is His own for ever. She can commune with Him too, whispering her trust, and receiving love-tokens in return, as by an electric wire ; yet she longs to hear her Husband's voice, and to see her Husband's face, for “sweet is His voice, and His countenance is comely.” The human heart craves for the presence of the loved object, and to every true believer that object is the person of Christ.

The tidings that the Husband-king is coming to take her home will not be other than delightful to His wife, if she is yearning after Him. Sometimes she may be restless and impatient, and cry, "Why tarry the wheels of His chariot?" but then it is plain she needs to be taught that He is Lord, and doeth all things well. Sometimes she may be startled at the harbingers of His approach, but this proves her to be clinging too earnestly to earth. If her heart is burning with love to Him, she will be on the tip-toe of expectation for His appearance; and the announcement, "Behold, I come quickly!" will find at once the response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

"Absent from the body," the believer will be "present with the Lord." To be *with Him* is indeed to be "in paradise." Only, however, when the redemption of the body from the grave is completed, will the Lamb's wife arrive at that fulness of joy which yet awaits her. In the interval between death and the resurrection, the soul will have all the happiness it can contain; but when the body is raised incorruptible, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and soul and body are together introduced into the unending enjoyment of the heavenly Husband's presence, then only will it be possible to understand completely the blessedness of those, who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

Meanwhile the Husband of every believer is not neglectful. When He forsook the earth in

person, He left us this comforting farewell, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And should His wife be idle, indolently spending her time, though she knows neither the day nor the hour when her Husband may arrive? Oh, if she loves Him, she will be walking and working as she knows He desires! She will be labouring to have herself ready against His appearance, every thought brought into subjection to His gracious will. She will be on the watch for His approach, so that He may not be unwelcomed. His footsteps, as He draws near, will be the sweetest music to the loving wife who realizes Christ's perfect love; and her heart will hardly be able to contain itself, at the thought of so soon seeing her Husband face to face.

There are cases when, on their dying beds, even true believers are not filled with peace and joy; and this arises frequently from the peculiarity of the diseases under which they are suffering. To the upright, however, there is "light at eventide," for the Lord cannot forsake His own. But when the spirit is not bowed down with bodily derangement, or from other causes, how it speaks out its delight!

"Happy! happy!" said Mrs. Hunter of Edinburgh, ten minutes before she breathed her last.

"O for arms to embrace Him! O for a well-tuned harp!" exclaimed Samuel Rutherford, as he was hasting away from earth.

"I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness—satisfied, satisfied!" were Charles Wesley's last words.

"I know," said Ebenezer Erskine when near his death; "I know that when my soul forsakes this tabernacle of clay, it will fly as naturally to my Saviour's bosom, as the bird to its beloved nest."

"My happiness is too great," said Dr. Payson on his deathbed; "it will wear me out. Hitherto I have viewed God in Christ as a *fixed star*, bright indeed, but often intercepted by clouds; but now He is coming nearer and nearer, and spreads into a sun so vast and glorious, that the sight is too dazzling for flesh and blood to sustain. Oh, my sister! my sister! could you but know what awaits the Christian—could you only know as much as I know—you could not refrain from rejoicing and leaping for joy."

And now, my reader, it is surely worthy of careful inquiry, whether you are among the number of those who have accepted the love of Him who is the Husband of every trusting soul. If it is so, then you are glorying not in yourself but in Him, hiding continually under the skirt of His garment, and cleaving to Him as your "*all in all*." If you have truly surrendered to Him, then you are showing your love by the heartiest obedience, living for Him who died for you. It will be your happiness withal, to have no part of your life, no corner of your heart, hidden from His inspection; and you will be evermore so longing

and preparing for His coming, that His appearing will fill you with the truest joy.

“Behold, He cometh with clouds! and every eye shall see Him!” Alas for those who have rejected the pleading voice of His pitying love! When the great day of His wrath is come, who among Christ’s despisers or neglecters shall be able to stand? Better far, while He is still calling so tenderly “Come unto Me,” to run into the outstretched arms of His love. The great white throne will thus lose all its terrors, for the Judge will have become your Husband; and to you there shall be “no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. God Himself shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.”

“Our God ere long will summon all
Who once on earth were born,
This flesh shall hear the trumpet’s call,
And live again that morn.
And, when in Christ His Son we wake,
These skies asunder roll,
And all the bliss of heaven shall break
Upon the raptured soul.

“And He will lead the white-robed throng
To His fair Paradise,
Where, from the marriage-feast, the song
Of endless praise shall rise;
And from His fathomless abyss
Of perfect love and truth,
Shall flow perpetual joy and bliss
In never-ending youth.

"O God ! now lead me of Thy love
Through this dark world aright ;
Lord Christ defend me, lest I rove,
Or lies delude my sight ;
And keep me steadfast in the faith
Till these dark days have ceased,
And ready still, in life or death,
For Thy great marriage-feast."

(Lyra Germanica.)

THE CULBIN SANDS.*

TWO hundred years ago there was a very fertile and well-cultivated estate on the southern shore of the Moray Firth,—two or three miles to the north-west of the town of Forres. It was known as the barony of Culbin (locally pronounced Coo-been). Amidst the various farms of which the property was composed, stood a well-built mansion in which the owner dwelt; and close by was an extensive orchard, rich in fruit-bearing trees. The family then in possession was distinguished among the gentry of the neighbourhood, and was connected, by blood or marriage, with some of the leading nobility of Scotland. Surrounded by a flourishing tenantry, and rejoicing in a fair estate of many hundred acres, it seemed as if nothing could be more secure than the position which the family of Culbin was privileged to enjoy; but a few years brought utter ruin, not only on the owner, but on the greater portion of those who farmed his ground. In 1695

* To a lecture, delivered in the Mechanics' Hall, Forres, by Mr. Martin, of Elgin, shortly before the writer's second visit to the Sands, he is largely indebted for the particulars here given regarding the destruction of the property of Culbin.

the proprietor, driven from house and lands, had to petition Parliament for relief from taxes, which the complete destruction of his property had rendered him totally unable to pay. The once lovely spot had by that time become a waste howling wilderness of sand. Where once the ploughman whistled and merry reapers sang; where once verdant fields were clothed with lowing herds and bleating flocks, or else waving in autumnal days with seas of golden grain,—there have been, for more than one hundred and seventy years, nought but hills and plains and valleys of ceaselessly shifting sand, as barren, for the most part, as the sea-beaten shore.

For some generations, this ocean of sand has covered considerably more than the barony of Culbin. Its extent is now fully seven miles long by two miles broad. In the loveliest summer day it is a peculiarly dreary place, and the attempt to cross it is felt to be exceedingly toilsome. You reach a height at which you have been aiming, and find that a broad valley stretches out before you, ending in another hill, higher, apparently, than that on which you are perched. You push on, perspiring from every pore, and your feet sinking some inches at every step. At length, half-blinded by the glare, you stand upon the top of the little eminence up which you have just been struggling, only to find a repetition of the same weary scene, and heights beyond heights stretching away in the distance, and giving no encouragement to advance.

But vastly more dreary and desolate is this locality, when a wild wintry wind is blowing. Then the whitish-coloured dry sand flows along the surface, with a continuity and a force resembling the movement of an immense river. Over hill and along vale it rushes, pouring down from the heights as if it were a waterfall, and rolling up and over heights further on,—not seeking any lower level, but going over the hills as easily as along the plains. Such a sight I beheld in the winter of 1867. To make one's way across the flood of sand, even for a little distance, was no easy task. Into eyes, and ears, and nostrils, it poured. It beat upon the skin like small hail, and completely impregnated the clothing. Our company were glad to beat a speedy retreat, carrying with us new ideas of the awful desolation which reigned around, and of the terrible instrumentalities which the Almighty Creator has always under complete control.

Never had more magnificent crops promised to reward the labours of the husbandman, than those which decked the barony of Culbin in the autumn of 1676. The earliest grain upon the most westerly farm was now ready for the sickle. As was the custom of the times, the farmer called friends and neighbours together to a feast, intending to begin his harvest next morning in his most westerly field, which was crowned with a crop of barley of extraordinary richness. A large number of strangers assembled, and partook, with the

family and servants of the tenant, of the dainties which had been liberally provided; while the host, encouraged by the promise of such bountiful crops, was more than usually elated, and more than usually earnest in pressing his hospitalities on all. The hours passed joyfully and quickly, and it was far in the night ere the company broke up. A perfect calm reigned in the atmosphere. As friend after friend shook hands with their entertainer, the plain rang with jocund laugh and cheery farewell. Scarcely one had any misgiving as to the weather of the morrow; and none could, in his wildest dreams, have fancied the dire calamity which was impending.

Not an hour had passed, after all was quiet in the house and farm-yard, till a change came. The merry-makers had retired to rest to refresh themselves for the pleasant labours of the coming day. Gusty blasts began to play ever and anon around the chimney-tops. Uncertainly, and at ever diminishing intervals, these whirling winds came at first; but ere long a hurricane from the west was heard raging without, which awoke the soundest sleeper, and made the strongest quail with terror. For hours it roared and raged, while the inmates of this and every house in the district crouched pale with fear in the quietest corner of their dwellings, not knowing but the next blast might hurl down the building, and crush them to death in the ruins. It appeared as if the dreadful night would never pass; but a perceptible

diminution of the fury of the storm was at length observed ; and gradually it fell as it had risen, till comparative quiet was restored, and the terror-stricken began to think of looking abroad. It was now full day, and the farmer and his men set out for the barley field. But lo ! what was waving yesterday with yellow grain was now a great heap of dry sea sand, with only a few heads of the crop here and there showing themselves above the desolation. Several fields around were devastated more or less in a similar manner ; and the poor husbandman, overwhelmed by the sudden calamity, could gather only a miserable handful, where yesterday he had promise, sure as earth could give, of a rich reward.

Great heaps of sand had for many years been gathering on the shore of the Moray Firth, at some distance to the west of the property of Culbin. The unexampled and sirocco-like tempest, which visited the shore during that awful night, had caught up the sand, dried by weeks of ceaseless sunshine, and hurled it along as a flood on the doomed spot. And thereafter, year by year, the storms which came from the west drove on the desolating wave, until farm after farm, house after house, the mansion of the laird and the cottage of the ploughman, were whelmed in one fell destruction. In twenty years from the first onslaught, the Barony of Culbin, once so beauteous and fertile, was covered with the ever-shifting and yet never-decreasing desolation, which renders it such

a dreary spot. Constantly do the winds carry away, as in a stream, a portion of its surface into the sea; but as constantly do the western shores of the Firth yield a new supply, which the winds drift onwards to make up for what has been removed. The sand-hills are unceasingly changing, according to the atmospherical currents to which they are subjected. Where there is a hill to-day, there may be a valley in a week; but, though changeable almost as the sea, the sand-flood, like the sea, continues to cover the territory, over which, more than a hundred and seventy years ago, it assumed such a disastrous dominion.

When we hear of such a blasting of earthly prospects, such an utter and swift destruction of earthly hopes, we are tempted to ask, "Were the lord of Culbin and his tenants wicked above all in the land?" Better for us, however, at such a time, to take the lesson of self-examination and departure from evil, to which the Great Teacher pointed when He said, "Those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 4, 5).

In a somewhat similar direction would I like my present homily to run. I desire that my readers may live a happy life. I wish that every succeeding year may be felt by them as more pleasant than its predecessor, so that, in their

experience, the last may be the best days, and the peace and joy of earth be ever brightening and growing more bright, till they are blended sweetly with the gladness and the glory of heaven. Neither health, nor wealth, nor fame, nor earthly friends can secure such permanent and increasing blessedness. It can be found only through our possessing "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8). The unchangeableness of the Saviour, anointed and sent by God, insures those who look to Him of solid and lasting enjoyment. The dreadful hurricane which commenced the destruction of Culbin ought to remind us of the more terrible storm, which must burst upon sinners unforgiven, and sweep away all on which they pride themselves. Let us, therefore, consider shortly, how the Lord Jesus is a refuge and a portion; a refuge from all danger, a portion that can never be taken away.

CHRIST IS A REFUGE FROM DIVINE WRATH.—When we allow its voice to be heard, conscience unites with the Bible in testifying that we have all sinned, and that sin must be punished by the righteous God. Of these two things, no more impressive proof can be found than in the Cross of the Lord Jesus. Had it been possible to pass by transgression, never had the awful scene been witnessed of the incarnate Creator dying in agony for sins of His own creatures. Let no one delude himself with the fancy that, by some way of his

own contriving, he may escape the just penalty of disobedience. Either in our own persons, or in Christ, must our sins meet their lawful doom. Have you seriously thought of this? Have you considered how suddenly the end of this life may come? With as little warning as the storm fell on the lands of Culbin may your dying hour come on you. The hail of God's vengeance may sweep away the refuge of lies in which you have been trusting, and your poor, naked, guilty soul be hurried to the bar of judgment, without a plea that can stay the sword of justice from falling on your devoted head. Most dreadful to stand before the Judge, with the crowning guilt upon you of having despised or neglected the love of the all-gracious Friend, who wishes now to cover you under the shadow of His wings!

Happy they that are hiding under the Rock of Ages! To them "there is now no condemnation." Justice is satisfied, for Jesus endured the curse on their behalf. "The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath them are the everlasting arms. A thousand shall fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, but nigh them destruction shall never come. The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover them all the day long. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help and the sword of thy excellency!"

Hearken to the cry of a guilty conscience.

The confession is that of a well-known Scottish poet. His plough, on a November day, has inadvertently destroyed the nest of a mouse; and, in view of bleak winter days, he bewails the dumb creature's loss, closing his tender lines with the mournful words—

“Still thou art blest compared wi’ me !
The *present* only toucheth thee ;
But, och ! I backward cast my e’e
On prospects drear,
And forward, though I canna see,
I *guess* and *fear* !”

Listen again to the rejoicing of one who has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the Gospel. “To me to die is gain! Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing!”

In a quaint old author I have seen a story something like this :—A certain man had a law-suit going on, and when his cause was to be heard, he applied himself to three friends to see what they would do for him. One answered, he would bring him as far on his journey as he could; the second promised that he would go with him to his journey's end; the third engaged to accompany him before the judge, and to speak

for him, and not to leave him till his cause was heard and determined. These three are a man's riches, his friends, and his Saviour. His riches will help him to comfortable accommodation while they stay with him; but they often take leave of a man before his soul takes leave of his body. His friends will go with him to the grave, and then say farewell. But Jesus will attend him to the judgment-seat, and so prevail for him there, that, in place of being counted a criminal, he shall be set down beside the Judge, and be made partaker of His everlasting kingdom and glory.

Surely, beloved reader, it is no impertinence to ask whether you are prepared to stand at the bar of God? Is the all-prevailing Advocate secured? Is your case committed to His care? Are you so abiding in Him, so identified with Him, that His death is counted as your death, and His righteousness as your righteousness? "The Man who is the hiding-place from the storm, and the covert from the tempest," earnestly entreats every sinner to come beneath His wings. Just as He wept over Jerusalem, so He mourns over you who are still ready to perish, for He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Let now the ever-blessed kinsman-Redeemer cover you with His blood and righteousness, and you shall be hidden in the awful day of the "judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

CHRIST IS A REFUGE FROM TEMPTATION.—Only those who have hidden in Jesus, as a covert from the wrath of God, will be anxious for deliverance from temptation to sin. If one can look on sin lightly, or wilfully walk in slippery places, it is much to be feared, nay, very certain, that he has never truly known and believed the love of God, manifested in His crucified Son. But the real child of God has many tempters. There is *the father of lies*, at the head of the troop by whom the Christian is constantly assailed; and the wondrous skill of Satan in attacking the weakest points, and appearing withal as if he were an angel of light and a trusty friend, makes it hard to defeat his attempts to ruin us. There is *the world*, with its witching smiles and flattering words, its rewards and its frowns, ever seeking to entangle us. Never were the snares of fashion and amusement, which it spreads around life's pathway, more likely to occasion halting and stumbling and grievous falls to old and young than now. And there is the greatest foe of all, *the old man*, the corrupt and traitorous nature within ourselves, ever pleading for indulgence, ever craving for gratification, ever ready to open the door to enemies from without. Oh, how shall we get safe through all, and reach the happy shore, where we shall be at rest in God's holy peace and love? Only by cleaving to Christ. He is the Captain of our salvation, and will "teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight;"

but He will also cover us with His shield and give us to sing, in the end, with David—

“He me relieved from my strong foes,
And such as did me hate;
Because He saw that they for me
Too strong were, and too great.”

Are you, my friend, hiding in this blessed refuge? Do you every morning put yourself beneath the covert, and beseech your Lord to preserve you from all ill during the duties of the day? Then truly you will understand what it is to be “kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.”

Alas for those who are dallying with temptation, or eagerly hasting after some gratification to “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” in spite of the entreaties of sober-minded friends and the warnings of conscience! Like the poor girl, lured by a lovely but fatal flower that bloomed on the verge of the falls of Niagara, another step may plunge them into irretrievable ruin. Only when too late, will they discover the inconceivable folly of losing life eternal for the momentary pleasures of sin.


CHRIST IS A REFUGE FROM ANXIETY.—Every one who thinks seriously at all, on any subject, has anxious thoughts not unfrequently excited. Even God’s reconciled children are too often worried by cares in regard to themselves, their families, or their business. No true Christian either can or will neglect the employment of

proper means in every case; but *then* he has a right to dismiss all troublesome anxiety. If God be for him, who or what can be against him? Hiding in Jesus, and casting all care on Him, the child of God should be at rest. The Almighty Friend, under whose shadow he abides, has the helm of the universe in His hand, and all things *must* therefore work for good to them that trust in Him. When Mrs. Hannah More was eighty years of age, she gave testimony of her faith in her Saviour-God in these words:—"When and Whether belong to Him who governs both worlds. I have nothing to do but to trust." "I have been thinking," said Cecil, the well-known English clergyman, "of many expressions of Samuel Rutherford's this morning in bed. I feel one to be the burden of the song, namely this—'I lay my head to rest on the bosom of Omnipotence!' While I can keep hold of this, it shall be a fine day, whether it rains or hails or shines."

Here is the secret of perfect peace. Does my reader thus roll himself and all his cares on Jesus? Does he hide in the Saviour from the vexations of life? The greatest cause of anxiety Christ can easily remove; and no trouble should we consider too small to roll over on Him. "Be careful for nothing; but *in everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

CHRIST IS A SATISFYING AND UNCHANGING PORTION.—Wealth, honour, fame can never fill the heart. However commonplace may be this remark, there is need for its being constantly sounded in the ears of men. “The race for riches” and earthly glory engages generation after generation, as if thus the chief good could be attained. How foolish the pursuit! “I have been everything,” said Severus, the Emperor of Rome, “and everything is nothing.” It was just what Solomon had found out long before, “All is vanity.” “I wish you a happy new year,” said a friend once to a Prime Minister of Great Britain. “It had need to be happier than the last,” was the reply, “for I cannot remember a single happy day in it all.” These men, on the pinnacle of earthly glory, and with all their hearts could desire, were nevertheless sick of the world.

How frequently and how unexpectedly do riches and honours suddenly vanish, and then the penniless sufferer is usually left without a friend. Too true is the remark of Gotthold:—“So long as there is blossom on the trees and honey in the flowers, the bees will frequent them in crowds, and fill the place with music; but when the blossom is over and the honey is gone, the bees too will all disappear. The same happens in the world of men. In the abode of fortune and pleasure friends will be found in plenty; but when fortune flies they disappear along with it.”



Amongst all the investments of moneyed men, not one is esteemed so reliable as landed property. But the experience of the lord of Culbin shows how easily the blast of God's anger may sweep it from us, even while we live. In any case, the fairest and surest earthly portion must be left behind at last ; and he only is truly wise who, like Mary of Bethany, chooses that good part which shall never be taken away.

“Christ is the treasure of the soul,
The source of lasting joy ;
A joy which want shall not impair,
Nor death itself destroy.”

When Jonathan Edwards was on his deathbed he bade his relatives good-bye ; then, joyfully exclaiming, “Now, where is Jesus of Nazareth, my true and never-failing friend ?” he entered into glory. If thus, my reader, you cling to Christ as the portion of your soul, you will find him in life, in death, and for ever a complete and satisfying inheritance.

Twice during the last hundred years, the shifting sands laid bare, for a time, a branch of a tree still standing in the orchard of Culbin. The first was a cherry, and it remained exposed till it spread forth leaves and blossomed. The second was an apple. It was favoured with a longer respite, and produced fruit which one man, not long dead, actually gathered and ate in his boyhood. The incubus of sand once removed, and

the trees exposed to the air and dew and sunlight, they proved themselves to be willing servants of their Great Creator. Be it yours and mine, dear reader, to draw so close to Jesus, that we may be freed from the crushing, killing sands of wrath and sin and carking care. Let us use and enjoy Him every day as our portion, basking in the sunlight of His love, and drinking of the river of His pleasures. Then assuredly will the fruits of the Spirit grow apace upon each of us. Our love to God and men, our joy, and peace, and gentleness, and goodness, will be a glory to our Redeemer and a blessing to our neighbours. Even in old age we shall bring forth fruit, and we shall flourish for ever in the courts of our God.

"THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH."

(SONG OF SOLOMON, I. 2.)

"**H**AS the pain gone, Mary?" said a poor mother to her dying daughter. The girl was about seventeen years of age. She had never known a father's care; and her mother and she had toiled hard to support themselves. They had both the noble spirit which scorns to lean on others, if it be at all practicable to maintain one's-self by diligence and economy. And they had succeeded pretty well, till a few months previously, when Mary caught a cold which ended in consumption. Now she was sinking fast, but salvation was not to seek. It had been found years before, through the teaching of her pious mother; and a good hope through grace sustained her soul, while the body was rapidly decaying.

At times Mary had to endure terrible paroxysms of pain. She had been attacked by one of these, and her mother was doing what she could to mitigate the anguish. Suddenly she noticed her daughter's face lighted up with an expression of peculiar joy and peace, and put the question, "Has the pain gone, Mary?" Her daughter replied:—

"No, dear mother, it has not gone. It is as

bad as ever; but that promise, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' was brought to my mind just now with such wonderful sweetness and power, that I would willingly endure more of the pain, to be sustained with such heavenly comfort."

The experience of dying Mary furnishes a simple interpretation of the subject of this paper. "The Kisses of Christ's Mouth" are, I apprehend, the manifold utterances of His love, and the wondrously varied and tender invitations and promises contained in the Word of God. Through these, when applied, individually or collectively, to the heart by the Holy Ghost, souls are converted at first; and afterwards the same means are employed to fill the soul with love divine, to afford cheer in time of adversity, strength under conflict, and comfort in death. It may not be uninteresting, to consider some simple illustrations of these uses of the "Kisses of His mouth."

I. CONVERSION.—Conviction is not conversion, though our guilt and the sinfulness of our nature must be more or less realized, before we can understand our need of a Redeemer. We are not converted, however, till we are trusting simply and solely in Christ, as our deliverer from wrath and sin. Even when we comprehend somewhat fully what the Saviour has done for transgressors, we shall not attain complete repose till we also behold the warrant to hope in Jesus, or to appro-

priate Himself and all His benefits as our own. "The promise is the seed of faith ;" and I proceed to offer a few examples in elucidation of the point.

A sailor was on the night watch in a vessel far out at sea. By a sudden squall he was thrown against the bulwarks, and considerably injured. In his rage he cursed the wind, the ship, the sea, and the God that made him ; but hardly were his blasphemies uttered, till the enormity of his guilt was presented to his mind, and he was filled with almost insupportable anguish and fear. Some days passed by, but no relief came to his trembling heart. At length, while turning over the contents of his chest, he fell in with a little package, wrapped in printed paper. On unrolling it, he discovered that the paper was a leaf of the Bible, and contained the greater part of the first chapter of Isaiah. He read it all, but was specially attracted by the invitation in the 18th verse :— "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." As he meditated on these words, the first rays of hope fell upon his spirit. He was encouraged to seek the Lord, and ere long found peace in believing.

Several years ago a young woman came to her Sabbath-school teacher in great distress of mind, because her sins had taken hold upon her, and she could not find her way to the Saviour. He strove to open up her path by pointing out many

invitations and promises of the Gospel, and by prayer both with her and for her. Several weeks elapsed, but the darkness became deeper, and the sadness of the poor girl greater. She came one night to a prayer-meeting, which her teacher held about the middle of the week; and after it was over, he again endeavoured to fix her mind on some of the tender calls of Christ to sinners. Two in special he dwelt upon, and repeated just when it was needful to allow her to go home. Let the result be furnished in the young woman's own words shortly thereafter addressed to her teacher:—"I feel to trouble you with this ill-written letter, but being brought from the bondage of sin and Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God, I cannot but proceed. How often have I passed by these words with indifference:—'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. xi. 28); and 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37). They dawned upon my mind on the night you spoke with me, with a double light; and the same Jesus that hushed the stormy waves into a calm, spoke peace unto my weary soul. I can say that prayer is now no longer a toil but a pleasure.

'Blest is the hour of tranquil morn,
And blest the hour of solemn eve,
When on the wings of prayer upborne,
The world I leave.'"

Another member of the same class wrote shortly

afterwards regarding herself:—"I cannot say that as yet I have found the peace that passeth all understanding; but I am putting *all* my trust in Jesus, so that I can rejoice at times when I think of the promise, 'He that believeth on him shall not be confounded'" (1 Pet. ii. 6).

The celebrated George Whitefield had a brother for whose conversion he had long prayed. This brother fell into a very gloomy, despairing state of mind. One evening he was invited to drink tea with the Countess of Huntingdon, and she endeavoured to cheer him by dilating upon the mercy of God in Christ. "My lady," replied her guest, "I know what you say is true. The mercy of God is infinite: I see it clearly; but ah! my lady, there is no mercy for me—I am a wretch entirely lost." "I am glad to hear it, Mr. Whitefield," said Lady Huntingdon. "I am glad at my heart that you are a lost man." He looked with great surprise. "What, my lady, glad, glad at your heart that I am a lost man?" "Yes, Mr. Whitefield, truly glad, for it is written, 'The Son of man is come to save that which was lost!'" The text was carried home with power. "Blessed be God for that," exclaimed he. "Glory to God for that word! O what unusual power is this that I feel attending it! Jesus Christ came to save the lost! Then I have a ray of hope." It was light at evening time. He was seized with sudden illness, and within an hour was in eternity.

Every reader of Scottish church history has

heard of the minister and martyr, Donald Cargill. Some time before he began to preach, he had terrible convictions of sin, and was much harassed by the fiery darts of Satan. He had a very bashful nature, and his unwillingness to open his mind to others greatly aggravated his distress. Under an overwhelming flood of despairing thoughts, he had resolved to put an end to his life. He was then living in the parish of Bothwell; and again and again he set out for the river Clyde, with the resolution to drown himself. Meeting persons he knew on the road, or on the banks of the river, he could not obtain sufficient secrecy to carry out his purpose; and so he rose one morning and walked to the open mouth of an old coal-pit, intending to throw himself in. He was just about to take the fatal leap, when the words in Matt. ix. 2, were deeply impressed upon his mind:—"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Such a marvellous power accompanied them, as at once to dispel every doubt and fear, and he returned home rejoicing in his Saviour God.

In the Life of M'Cheyne there is an account of a woman, who was for three months oppressed with an awful sense of her sinfulness. She was brought to a happy hope, while Mr. M'Cheyne was opening up to her the words of Jesus:—"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John iv. 10).

"Master missionary," said an expiring saint who had been born of heathen parents, "do you remember a sermon you preached upon the words of Jesus, 'I am the way'?" (John xiv. 6.) "I remember it well," said the minister. "And so do I," said the heir of glory; "for these words were the means of my conversion."

I know one whose mind was overburdened with a sense of sin, and who went home rejoicing, when a friend had induced her to consider for a little the words, "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). I remember another on whom the day of grace dawned in loveliness, as she thought upon the text:—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. iii. 20).

Time would fail me to tell of the innumerable instances on record, which exhibit the effect of the tender and compassionate words of our God and Saviour, in quickening faith in human hearts. The specimens given must suffice for the present; but before passing on, it is dutiful to inquire whether my reader knows anything, in his own experience, of these converting kisses of the mouth of Christ. Have you realized your need of Him, and His yearning love towards you? If not yet, hearken, I beseech you, to His words:—"Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." And what might be expected to follow this accusation by

the great Heart-Searcher? Might we not look for a call to the lightnings of heaven, to blast the rebellious worm that has thus insulted the Deity? This were righteous indeed; but a far different utterance breaks upon the ear:—"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance" (Isaiah xliii. 24-26). Poor needy sinner, here is thy Saviour offering to kiss thee with the kisses of His mouth; to seal a pardon to thy heart, if only thou wilt permit Him. Perhaps thou mayest have an intention to yield to Christ some day; but like Augustine, "*Not now.*" O be not guilty of the heinous wickedness of postponing the acceptance of such marvellous love. It is thy Maker, thy Brother, He who bore the unutterable agonies of the cross that He might bring thee a free pardon, who now desires to embrace thee. Put off no longer. *Now* let Him kiss thee. Ask Him to do it, and thus to make thee His. Take His promises to thy heart of hearts, and seek His Spirit to enable thee to realize their sweetness. Then thou wilt know that His pressing invitations, His promises of pardon and peace, are kisses indeed.

II. ENJOYMENT OF LOVE DIVINE.—The grand office of the Comforter is to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto the soul. The instrument He employs is the word of truth, and especially those portions which speak of Christ's

love in doing and dying in our stead, the glorious inheritance that has thus been secured, and the encouragements which so abound to confide implicitly in the Saviour. Thus the Holy Ghost reveals "Christ in us the hope of glory;" and as we meditate on the riches of His grace, we learn to joy in God.

President Edwards has told us of the inward sweetness which he enjoyed, while reading of the love of Christ as portrayed in the Canticles. And "oftentimes," he says, "in perusing the Bible, every word seemed to touch my heart, and I felt a harmony between something in my heart and those sweet powerful words."

It was while Mr. Flavel was journeying on horseback, and meditating on the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, that he found them to be indeed "the kisses of Christ's mouth." As he mused on the glorious truths, his heart was ravished with tastes of heavenly joy. "He utterly lost the sight and sense of this world and all its concerns, so that he knew not where he was. At last, perceiving himself faint through a great loss of blood from his nose, he alighted from his horse, and sat down at a spring, where he washed and refreshed himself, earnestly desiring, if it were the will of God, that he might there leave the world. His strength reviving, he finished his journey in the same delightful frame. He passed that night without sleep, the joy of the Lord still overflowing him, so that he seemed

an inhabitant of the other world. After this, a sweet serenity and peace long continued with him; and for many years he called that day '*one of the days of Heaven.*'"

In these cases the experience of Jeremiah was renewed. That prophet said once (ch. xv. 16), "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." If we desire the same delightful results for ourselves, we must often be musing on the gracious promises of God, and asking the while for the Spirit to unfold their richness and sweetness. So shall we taste and enjoy the Saviour's love, and be kissed with the kisses of His mouth.

III. CHEER IN ADVERSITY.—Numberless are the examples of the power of the Divine promises to sustain the spirit and gladden the heart, under the deprivation of almost all earthly comforts. One or two cases, however, of an interesting kind, may be given.

A worthy clergyman of Jedburgh went, on a stormy winter day, some miles from town, to see a poor old man who lived in a lonely hut. The aged invalid was, so far as temporal comforts were concerned, in but a sorry condition. He had little more income than was requisite to procure the merest necessities in the way of food; and the snow was drifting through the roof, and under the door, while the fire was almost out for

want of material to replenish it. Unable to help himself, the poor man sought comfort from the words of the Faithful Promiser. He was busy reading his Bible, when the minister entered and asked, "What are you about to-day, John?" "Ah! sir," said the happy saint, "*I am sittin' under His shadow wth great delight!*"

Dr. Gregory of Woolwich used to tell a similar story of a poor cripple, whom he was called to visit. He found the invalid deprived of all power to move either hands or feet. On his knees was his much-used Bible, supported by a peculiarly-formed cushion, and open at a favourite portion of the Psalms of David. The poor cripple had but a very small weekly allowance on which he could depend; and when the doctor asked him how the remainder of his wants were supplied, he answered:—"Why, sir, 't is true, as you say, that my allowance would never support us; but when it is gone, I rely upon the promise I found in this book—'*Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure;*' and I have never been disappointed yet; and so long as God is faithful to His word, I never shall." Dr. Gregory then inquired if he was never tempted to repine. "Not for the last three years," replied the poor man; "for I have learned from this book in whom to believe; and though I am aware of my weakness and unworthiness, I am persuaded that, according to His promise, *He will not leave me, nor forsake me.*"

Surely such consolation amid sore affliction

proves the wonderful efficacy of the kisses of Christ's mouth. "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb."

IV. STRENGTH UNDER CONFLICT.—The Christian is frequently called to fight against the "hidden evils of his heart," and to repel the assaults of Satan ; and nothing lends him greater vigour in the battle than the remembrance of his Master's precious promises.

When Paul was attacked by a messenger of Satan, the Lord did not answer his thrice-repeated prayer for help by driving off the foe ; but He kissed His servant by the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Thus was support given to carry on the fight.

The same precious words were peculiarly blessed to a pious young lady, who had fallen into low spirits, and under strong temptation had hurried down to a river near where she lived, intending to drown herself. As she was arranging her dress so as to prevent her from floating, she felt something in her pocket. It was her much-used Bible. She took it out, with the intention to read a few words in it for the last time. The text which gave such strength to Paul met her eyes, as she opened the volume ; and the words came with such marvellous power to her heart as to break the spell of Satan. This kiss of Christ's

mouth dispelled every doubt and fear; and she returned home singing the praises of Him, who had thus broken the snare of the enemy.

A much-loved relative of mine, who left us long ago for "the city which hath foundations," once told me that in early life she had a time of winter in her spiritual experience. She had previously attained a happy hope in her Saviour, and taken her place among the professed followers of Christ. Naturally of a lively temperament, one would scarcely have expected her to have had any season of gloom; but somehow she lost her sight of the Sun of Righteousness, and walked for a considerable period in comparative darkness. Never, however, did she lose hope altogether; but there was no enjoyment. The approach of a communion season roused her from her half-slumbering state; and now, like the spouse in the Canticles, she very earnestly strove to realize the presence of Him, whom in her inmost soul she loved. By increased attention to the ordinances of His house, by reading and meditating on His precious promises, and especially by prayer, she sought His face. An answer came not for a week or two; but like the woman of Syrophenicia, delay and apparent denial only quickened and intensified her supplications. One evening she was pleading for a restoration of comfort, and suddenly the promise recorded in John xvi. 22, was brought home with power to her heart:—"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice,

and your joy no man taketh from you." It was a kiss from her Saviour's mouth. Her participation in the Eucharist, a day or two thereafter, was peculiarly delightful ; and the love-token she had received ministered strength for happy service during many days. The remembrance of it was sweet, even after a lapse of forty years.

Another dear daughter of God, who has also been for years in glory, related to me that at one period she was severely tried. A wicked husband, an ill-doing son, and many cross providences had united to sink her into the depths. But from them she continued to cry to Him who sits upon the holy hill of Zion, and who never allows any honest suppliant to seek His face in vain. As she sought, He drew near. He kissed her lips with the sweet promise which Isaiah records (ch. lxvi. 13), "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you ; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Her wounded heart was soothed by the heavenly balm. Her anxieties were dispelled ; and though her earthly circumstances were little improved, she found all she needed in her God.

V. COMFORT IN DEATH.—The approach of death tests the value of all our possessions, and the solid comfort which God's word is then fitted to impart proves its divine character, even to the ungodly. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," is the wish of many

more than the wicked prophet of Aram. The Rev. Richard Cecil's words well describe the rich consolations, which the Christian possesses in life's latest hours :—"Sitting," he says, "in my blanket, with the Bible before me, I seem like old Elwes (the miser) with a bushel of bank-notes and India bonds; but with this difference, that he must have his all taken away, and I shall take all mine with me."

A caravan was once pursuing its way through Hindustan, when one of the company, fairly overcome by fatigue, sunk down upon the earth, and was coolly left by his heathen brethren to perish. A Christian missionary, who was travelling behind, stopped beside the poor old man; and perceiving his end not far off, he knelt beside him, and whispered in his ear, "Brother, what is your hope?" Rousing himself, the dying man was only able feebly to articulate the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and then with a few long-drawn breaths his spirit passed away. The missionary was greatly amazed; but in the hand of the dead he observed a little piece of paper. Taking it carefully from the grasp of the corpse, he found it to contain the whole of the first chapter of the First Epistle of John, in which occur the words that the departing one had found, in life and death, to be indeed a kiss of Christ's mouth.

"I shall never forget," wrote the Rev. Mr. Cecil, from whom I have already quoted, "the

day when I stood by the bedside of my sick mother. 'Are you not afraid to die?' I asked. 'No.' 'No! Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?' 'Because God has said, Fear not; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee'" (Isaiah xliii. 2).

The Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, at an early period of his ministry, preached from the words in Isaiah xliii. 3—"I am the Lord thy God;" and the consideration of the covenant relation, in which Jehovah thus reveals himself, afforded Mr. Erskine peculiar delight. All through his useful life, the thoughts thereby suggested animated and consoled him; and when he came to die, he remarked to an inquiring friend, "I am now doing with my soul what I did forty years ago; I am resting on that word, '*I am the Lord thy God*;' and on this I mean to die."

From the assaults of Satan, or the peculiar nature of their disease, God's children are sometimes in darkness for a time upon their dying beds. It needs, however, but a suitable kiss of Christ's mouth to banish all their fears.

"Give me my promise," said a dying saint to her attendant. Memory was fast failing; and she could not for the moment recall the word, on which the Lord had caused her to hope many years before. The nurse repeated the passage (2 Sam. xxiii. 5), "Although my house be not so

with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." No more support was required to cross the Jordan, and speedily she was on the further bank, amid "the sweet fields of living green."

The Rev. James Durham, minister in Glasgow in the seventeenth century, was a very pious man and powerful gospel preacher. None understood better, or could more admirably unveil to the minds of others, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Yet when death was approaching, he felt himself deprived for a time, of the consolation he had so often ministered to others. While in this state he was visited by the Rev. Andrew Gray, also a clergyman in Glasgow, who pointed him to the words in John vi. 37:—"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Like the drops of honey to the fainting Jonathan, was this promise to the servant of the Lord. "Enough," he replied. "I will cast all my good deeds and all my bad deeds overboard, and swim to glory on this plank of free grace."

Surely, my dear reader, such peace of conscience, and such joy in the Lord, as the kisses of Christ's mouth confer, whether in life or death, are worth possessing. What are all the baubles of earth in comparison? Wealth, fame, honour never satisfy the soul; but the enjoyment of the love of Christ gives rest to every longing of the heart. He is a personal Saviour, and delights to "sate the

weary soul, and to replenish every sorrowful soul." Happy they who unite heartily in the petition, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." Let it be yours, and so will you be made glad. Draw near to Him, and He will speak peace to your heart, while He shows you His hands and His side.

Say not, "I must wait till He kiss me, and I know not whether He will." Nay, my friend, He is waiting for you. Hearken to His call:—"If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In these sweet words Jesus comes nigh, and wishes you to kiss Him. The poorest, neediest, vilest sinner you may be on earth, and yet Jesus desires to embrace you. He Himself is the very water of life. O clasp Him to your heart, and let your lips meet His. One drop of this water of life will refresh and comfort you for ever.

They who once taste the consolations of Christ follow on to know more and more of His grace and love. For the cloudy and dark day they lay up stores of comfort, by hiding His words in their hearts. In the multitude of their thoughts within them, His comforts delight their souls; and when this world of shadows has fled, and the world of eternal realities is opened to their sight, they "behold the King in his beauty," and realize that "in his presence is fulness of joy."

MR. BRUCE AND HIS FRIENDS :
OR A CONVERSATION CONCERNING PRAYER.

PART FIRST.

“**A**ND you really think, Mr. Bruce, that we may confidently expect our heavenly Father’s guidance in answer to prayer?”

“Indeed I do, Miss Russell. If we come to Him by Jesus, the way to the Father, and ask in the Saviour’s name, we are assured we shall be heard. You remember the Psalmist’s words, ‘What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose’ (Psalm xxv. 12); and the Lord’s gracious promise, ‘I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye’ (Psalm xxxii. 8).”

The speakers were walking along a country road in the north of Scotland, and were accompanied by several other visitors at a neighbouring Hydropathic Establishment, who had gone out for a stroll. It was an afternoon in November, but there was no gloom. It seemed, with the dry air and bright sunshine, like a day stolen from summer; and the Italian sky, and beauteous

landscape, and gentle breeze, spoke sweetly to the devout heart of Him whose name is LOVE. As our little party walked along, Miss Cotton asked—

“May one bring everything, great or small, to the throne of grace?”

“Undoubtedly,” was Mr. Bruce’s reply; “for the apostle says, ‘Casting ALL your care upon him; for he careth for you’ (1 Peter v. 7). In connection with this passage, an old friend of mine used to remark, that no Christian had the right to be burdened with any anxiety, but should roll it over on his Almighty Friend.”

“There are some cautions and limitations,” continued Mr. Bruce after a pause, “which should be borne in mind for our direction in prayer.”

“May I ask you to indicate some of them?” said Miss Russell.

“With pleasure,” our friend responded; “and the first remark I would make is, that we should be careful not to pretend to ask, if our minds are already made up to follow a certain course. If we honestly wish to be directed, we must be willing to take any path our guide may point out. In connection with this, I shall by and by relate to you something of my own experience. Meanwhile let me tell you an anecdote to illustrate what I mean:—

“A country clergyman was waited on by a member of his congregation, asking advice as to whether she should accept for her husband a man in the same parish who had proposed to her.

to worldly blessings, we have, however, no absolute promise beyond bread and water. All God's children may come to him daily with the certainty of obtaining pardon, peace, and purifying grace; but in regard to things seen and temporal, they shall have only what their Father sees to be really fitted to promote their eternal welfare."

"Then we may not ask for earthly good things?" said a middle-aged member of the party.

"O yes! Mr. Hughes, indeed we may, and ought," was Mr. Bruce's response. "Only we must pray with entire submission, leaving the All-wise and All-loving to choose for us. If it be for His glory and our good, we shall get beyond all our asking."

"But what about spiritual blessings for our relatives and friends?" inquired Miss Russell.

"In regard to these," said Mr. Bruce, "we have no positive warrant to expect that God will certainly give us the souls of others at our cry. For those, however, in whom we are interested, it is our duty to be humbly importunate, and to give the Lord no rest till He return and bless them; and if He enables us to plead earnestly and perseveringly for them, we may cherish the hope of a gracious answer in His own good time. I knew one, long ago, who could and did sing thanksgivings for a coming answer to prayer, weeks, if not months, before the answer was received."

"That was very curious. Tell us all about it," said several voices.

“She was a worthy widow who kept a little shop for a livelihood. I became acquainted with her when she had half-a-dozen children ; but one after another, just as they came to manhood and womanhood, they were carried off by consumption. One of her family, a baker to trade, was laid down by this fatal disease. He was of a very retiring and reticent disposition, and his pious mother knew not from his own lips whether he was truly Christ’s or not. That he was well acquainted intellectually with the way of salvation, she was quite assured ; but whether he had really given the Saviour the chief place in his affections was what she longed to know. With all a mother’s intense desire she pleaded for her dying boy, and for the cheering assurance of his being in Christ. Turning over an old writer on prayer one day, she met with the remark, ‘ That in respect to those things which the Lord has not absolutely promised, His child may properly supplicate Him. If He does not mean to grant the request, He will somehow shut His child’s mouth, as He did that of Moses when He said, Speak no more unto me of this matter. But if the suppliant’s mouth is filled with arguments, and he is kept importunately pleading, he may be sure the answer is coming, however long it may be delayed.’ The widow compared this with her own experience. She had felt, and continued to experience, a peculiar freedom at the throne of grace, when petitioning for the spiritual life of her son, and for some

manifest outcome of his faith and hope, ere he should be removed from her. Enabled thus to press her suit, she concluded that the answer would be sure to come in God's good time; and hence she gave glad thanks for the fulfilment of her desires, a considerable time before she saw what she craved for."

"And did she really get all her wish?" said I.

"Most fully were her requests answered; and the last minutes of the lad's life were brilliant beyond words to describe. He suddenly sat up in bed. An eager, joyous expression lighted up his pale thin face with unearthly beauty. Stretching forth his hands towards One invisible to all but himself, he cried, with all the delight of a child meeting a long-absent parent, 'Lo, this is my God; I have waited for him, and he will save me: this is the Lord; I have waited for him, I will be glad and rejoice in his salvation' (Isaiah xxv. 9). It was a last effort of expiring nature, and he immediately departed, leaving his weeping but happy mother bending over his precious dust."

Our party had now got back to the Institution in which we were temporary sojourners, and the conversation had to cease. A promise was however exacted from Mr. Bruce, that he would continue his interesting observations and reminiscences at the earliest opportunity.

MR. BRUCE AND HIS FRIENDS :
OR A CONVERSATION CONCERNING PRAYER.

PART SECOND.

MR. BRUCE, though pretty far advanced in years, was one of those cheerful Christians who never get old at heart. He had all the blitheness of youth about him, and he had good grounds for being happy. In early life he had given himself to Jesus, and though confessedly often fainting and failing in his heavenward course, his leading aim was to glorify Him, whose loving-kindness he felt to be an unceasing well-spring of joy. Perhaps more solemn Christians thought our old friend sometimes rather buoyant in spirit; but as Mr. Bruce ever and anon realized the love of his Father in heaven, and of his adorable Redeemer, his heart leapt within him. He could not walk with downcast eyes and saddened look, but took for his daily motto, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." Without doubt he had his times of weeping, because of his natural perversity and frequent shortcomings in duty, but he kept these for his closet; and if indeed he wept elsewhere, the

tears were those of sympathy for others, or tears of joy at the goodness of his Lord. To the young especially, he was thus an attractive Christian; and as he tried to avoid putting his candle under a bushel, few could come into contact with him, without discovering that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The friends with whom Mr. Bruce had become acquainted at the Hydrôpathic Establishment, and with whom he often walked, were not long of finding an occasion for claiming the fulfilment of his promise. Approaching him, while he sat in the drawing-room of the Institution, Miss Russell, as our appointed representative, expressed a wish to hear what had been the personal experience to which he had formerly referred.

"My dear friends," said Mr. Bruce, "take seats and gather round me, and I shall gladly relate all about it. Before, however, I speak of that portion of my own history, which illustrates the caution that I deemed it right to offer in regard to prayer, will you permit me to narrate some cases of answers, which I know to have been given immediately to pressing supplications?"

"Oh! do tell us about these, Mr. Bruce," said several voices; and the old gentleman proceeded:—

"I knew a boy, many years ago, who had a very loving and excellent mother. When about eight years of age, he found on his return from

school one day, that his mother had been for some hours in dreadful agony from cramp in the stomach. Every remedy that medical skill could suggest had been tried in vain, and the child was horrified by the moans and cries of his distressed parent, and still more by the saddened looks of his father, and other friends who had been called together, under the apprehension that the sufferer's last hour had come. The boy had been taught to look to God as his reconciled Father in Jesus, and to Him he appealed in the hour of distress. Kneeling down in a corner of his mother's bedroom, he pleaded with all the simplicity of a child, but with intensest earnestness, that her life might be spared. 'Thou hast said,' he cried, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. This is our day of trouble. Fulfil now, O my God, this blessed promise of thine, for Jesus' sake.' The petition was not unanswered. The disease yielded immediately to the remedies applied; and for long years the boy rejoiced in the presence of the mother, who had been restored from the gates of death in reply to his supplication. You will observe how the child plied his argument at the throne of grace. It was based upon God's promise; and if we desire to be successful petitioners, we will take care continually to employ the mighty, Heaven-provided, lever power, '*Thou hast said!*'

"The other case, to which I wished to refer, was that of the same boy a few years later. He was

suffering from a very painful and protracted sickness, and there seemed no hope that he would come through. His grandfather, a very godly man, whose name the boy bore, was sent for to see him when it was thought his last hour was near. The old man prayed earnestly for restoration, and for direction to proper means for allaying and removing the disease. The prayer was heard. Within an hour a remedy was found that proved effectual, and the boy is now a man as old as I, and an humble follower of Jesus."

"Your examples," said Mr. Hughes, "would almost lead us to expect the very things for which we ask."

"You mistake me, my dear friend," said Mr. Bruce, "if you draw that inference. I produced the instances mainly to show that God hears, and often *at once* answers prayer. But if He delays, or sends something different from what we have asked, still we are to believe that He has given, or will give, the wisest and most loving reply; and we shall see it to be really so, when we stand before the throne."

Mr. Bruce ceased speaking for a moment, but suddenly resuming, he said—

"A German writer has remarked, that 'in the actions of God's children there are often secrets which they themselves do not understand;' and I have heard of a case somewhat confirmatory of this observation, at least in regard to special petitions in prayer."

"Do, please, Mr. Bruce, favour us with the particulars," was uttered all round the circle.

"I am afraid I shall tire you out," said the old gentleman ; but as repeated exclamations of "No fear of that!" and bright expectant faces around him, assured him of earnest listeners, he continued—

"A pious friend of mine, who has had considerable experience at sick-beds, was asked to visit a banker's clerk who was fast hastening to the grave. From his childhood the young man had been indoctrinated in the truths of the Bible ; and having in his own family circle two admirable examples of living Christianity, he loved and honoured the Master's brethren. He had never, however, settled definitely for himself the great question of his own personal interest in the Saviour ; and when death was staring him in the face, his soul was in great trouble. My friend set before him the free and full salvation from wrath and sin, which in Christ Jesus is offered to any, to every sinner ; and when he called the second time, he found the dying man still unable to settle his mind steadfastly on anything, but yet aiming after a firm hold of Jesus, and longing for rest in His love. For these, the desires of the tossing sufferer, my friend was asked to pray. He knelt by the bedside, and briefly but earnestly presented the case to his Father in heaven. As he prayed, he was somehow led to ask, that his young acquaintance might be enabled so to realize God's love in Christ, that he might be in a position

to say with the Psalmist, 'My heart is fixed ; my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise.' On his road homeward, my friend reflected on the words he had used in his supplications, and blamed himself not a little, for unguardedly, as he thought, employing such a petition. He feared that from the nervous excitability of the patient, such fixedness of heart could never be attained ; and perhaps the uneasiness of the sick man might be increased, by the absence of what the form of his disease made it impossible for him to have on earth. Judge of the pleasant surprise of my friend, when, calling on the following morning, he was told that during the night God had answered his every petition ; and that now the poor sufferer had such a delightful view of the free grace and love of Jesus, that he could find no words so appropriate to express his feelings, as those used by his bedside the previous evening—'My heart is fixed ; my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise.' Thenceforth it was easy to die."

"Thanks, Mr. Bruce, for this interesting anecdote," said Miss Russell ; "but we are all anxious to hear what you promised to tell us about yourself."

"It's an old story now," he replied ; "but it seems to me as fresh as if it had occurred but lately. I was acting as cashier in a mercantile house, but circumstances had occurred to make me desirous of a change. A former fellow-clerk, to whom I spoke confidentially of my wishes,

hinted to me that there was an opening in a branch of the trade to which I had been originally bred, and that I might judiciously and hopefully start on my own account. I consulted a gentleman in the city where I live. He was an old business friend of my father, and knew enough to guide him in encouraging me to proceed. Without my father's concurrence and monetary assistance, however, I could not take one step; and all the details I laid carefully before him, and expressed a desire that he would come to the city and investigate for himself. From the earliest stage, I had been particular in spreading out the case before the Lord. I told Him all that was in my heart, that I desired nothing but His will to be done, that I had no wish for wealth; but if it were His pleasure, I craved for what would enable me to get through the world in decency, and to help the cause of Christ. Ere long I had a letter from my father. He told me he was coming to town; and the tidings made me more earnest in my prayers. As I knew that obedience to my parents was both my privilege and my duty, I pleaded that my heavenly Father would graciously indicate to me His will in that of my father on earth. So far as a very searching examination enabled me to discover, I was willing to remain happy as a servant, or to commence on my own account, whichever might be God's will. My father arrived, and we went together to see the gentleman to whom I have referred. There was a long consultation. I

stood by waiting for the decision. When all points had been discussed, my father looked up and said, that he thought it advisable I should give my present employers due notice, and begin business for myself as soon as they could conveniently let me go. I received it as God's voice to me.

"Some months afterwards I commenced. I had every advantage in a knowledge of the goods in which I dealt, and of those whom I wished to make my customers. Of capital I had enough for all my needs, and more waiting for me when I could usefully employ it. I wrought hard, and economized my expenditure to the utmost. I managed to get through a considerable amount of business; and every day I asked the blessing, which alone maketh rich, to accompany my honest endeavours. By bad debts I lost not a farthing; but I was grieved exceedingly to find, on completing my first annual balance, that in spite of my most strenuous exertions, my net profits for the year were less than my personal expenditure, and indeed were little more than half of what I had had for salary as a clerk. I was thus considerably poorer than if I had remained another man's servant, and began my second year a few pounds behind the world. This unpleasant result I had scarcely expected; and it set me to inquire whether I had not had a secret desire to be my own master, while I had professed before my Maker that I was willing to follow any course He chose to appoint for me. My

investigation, however, resulted in the conclusion that, so far as I could discover, *I had not dealt in this matter insincerely with God.*

“My second year showed an increasing business, and no effort on my part was spared to improve my position. It resulted, however, worse than the first. Certain goods I had in stock had declined considerably in price, and my second balance made it too plain that I was further behind than ever. This nearly led me to give up in despair. To be toiling so hard, and saving all possible outlay, and not to be making the salary of a clerk, surely made it plain that Providence was frowning on me, and that I must have deceived myself in thinking that I had been truly resigned to His will. Great searching of heart followed; but still I was unable to find that I had been a deceiver. My earthly father cheered me with loving words, and I was encouraged to carry on.

“My third annual balance was looked forward to with no small interest. My labours and my prayers were not slackened; and as months passed by, I thought the aspect of my affairs was becoming more hopeful. My third balance-sheet proved that it was really so. I had made enough to pay up all the deficiencies of the previous years, and to meet my personal outlay; and besides all this I had a small sum additional, to form the nucleus of a capital of my own. I assure you I was very glad and grateful to the Giver of all good; and never have I had a balance

since that day, that I have not had more or less to add to my capital. You understand I was never eager to be rich; and at my age I can never expect to be a wealthy man. I desired ever to be the master of my business, and not to be its slave. It has been always a delight to me to give to Christ's cause as I went along, for over all I have, I consider myself only as His steward. I love withal to do a little direct work for Him in the vineyard, so far as my abilities and time will permit. I am, however, deeply conscious how far short I have come in devotion to my all-gracious Redeemer, and how unworthy I am of all the loving-kindnesses of my reconciled Father in heaven. But my experience, I think, carries this lesson, that prayer and pains will certainly secure God's blessing; and that if, with sincerity of heart and simple faith, we commit ourselves to His guidance, He will lead us, not perhaps by a quick and easy path, but certainly by the '*right way* to the city of habitation.'"

The gong was already sounding for prayers, and the little circle was broken up for the night; but we who heard the remarks of our old friend had much material for pleasant and profitable meditation. May all of us learn to "delight ourselves in the Lord; and he shall give us the desires of our hearts."

"In all thy ways acknowledge the Lord, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 6).

CONVERSATION REGARDING SOME PHASES OF
CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

MR. BRUCE had returned to his own quiet home, and resumed his ordinary duties. One evening after tea, he had set himself to some special work connected with his Master's kingdom. He had become deeply engaged with the subject, when the door-bell rang, and the servant speedily ushered two gentlemen, Mr. Milligan and myself, into the room. Our old friend received us very warmly. The interruption did not put him about. He had apparently learned to see in every visitor a demand upon his time by his Heavenly Father; and therefore it was a pleasure, as well as a duty, to fall in sweetly with every Divine arrangement.

My companion, though comparatively young, was an energetic labourer in more than one department of the vineyard; and all his acquaintances respected and loved him, for his quiet, unobtrusive manner, and his thorough-going discharge of everything he took in hand. I had met him on his way to consult Mr. Bruce, regarding some matters in a department of Christian labour,

in which they were mutually interested ; and at his request I had gladly agreed to accompany him.

Towards the close of the conversation on Mr. Milligan's special business, an observation was made, "that the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance;" and Mr. Bruce replied—

"That is generally true, I doubt not, in regard to those who partake; but with respect to on-lookers, I rather think—nay, I am sure—it may be much blessed by the Spirit in drawing sinners to Christ."

"What leads you to think so?" was Mr. Milligan's inquiry.

"My own experience," answered Mr. Bruce. "I well remember when I was a child, of seven or eight years of age, the influence of the sacrament of the Supper upon me. The addresses of the officiating clergymen, all bearing on the love of the crucified Redeemer, had considerable effect; but the solemn service itself, the breaking of the bread, the giving of it to the communicants, with the words, 'Take, eat; this is my body broken for you:' the presenting of the cup, with the words, 'Drink ye all of it, for this cup is the new testament in my blood shed for the remission of the sins of many,' affected me frequently to tears. I felt the Saviour's love to poor sinners to be so vast and yet so tender, that my heart was won; and then when my own beloved friends rose from my side, and went to take their places at the table of the Lord, I felt much like Moses

when he exclaimed, 'Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!' I wished that I too were of age to go and testify my love to Jesus."

Mr. Milligan and I were silent. After a brief pause Mr. Bruce remarked—

"There are great differences of the ways by which the Lord leads sinners to yield themselves to the Saviour. Some pass through terrible convictions; others are 'drawn by the cords of love.' Zaccheus and Lydia I take to be instances of the latter class, and my own experience has been similar. I have not forgotten the first time I sat down at the Lord's Table; and what decided me to apply for admission."

"If you have no objections, I would much like to have some account of it," said Mr. Milligan; and so the old gentleman continued:—

"As I grew up from childhood into youth, and then into young manhood, the celebration of the Lord's Supper continued to influence me more or less. Every returning solemnity was a call upon me to decide openly for Christ; but conscience was too often quieted by a promise that *next* time I would be found among the confessors of Jesus. Season after season passed, with winters and summers in my feelings towards God, interchanging even more frequently than the cold and heat, which came and went upon the earth. At length, when I had shortly passed the nineteenth anniversary of my birthday, it was announced

that the Supper would be dispensed in a few weeks thereafter, and those who desired to be present for the first time were asked to apply to the minister. The old pleas for delay prevailed for a couple of Sabbath-days. On the third Sabbath, however, our pastor, in his afternoon sermon, was led to speak very touchingly about the love of the Redeemer, and the importance of choosing Him without delay. I was greatly affected. I yielded myself to the Saviour as I sat in the pew, and resolved to confess Him openly at the coming celebration of His death. Lest my feelings should cool, I watched for and caught the minister in the church porch immediately after the conclusion of the service; and begged to be allowed to come to the Table, though I was so late in making my application. He spoke very encouragingly to me. I joined his young communicants' class. Some of the advices I then received from his lips, I have repeated many times since for the good of others. I sat down at the Lord's Table, and found the ordinance refreshing. Not a cloud was in the sky. I knew well I was a poor sinful creature, unable in the least to save myself; but round me the light of the Sun of Righteousness shone, and it was altogether 'a time of love.'"

Mr. Milligan looked up with a saddened face, and observed, "I am sorry to say that my first communion was not like yours. I had then very inadequate views in regard to the ordinance."

"Blessed be God," responded his old friend, "you have, however, been led to understand your Saviour and yourself better since that time."

"I hope so," was Mr. Milligan's modest reply ; and then Mr. Bruce remarked :—

"An intimate friend of mine once told me of an interesting case. A young woman of his acquaintance was suddenly influenced by a casual remark to seek an interest in Christ, and almost instantaneously found her way to the Saviour's feet, and to a happy hope in Him. Days and weeks passed by, and her joy and peace knew no perceptible decline. A celebration of the Lord's Supper was approaching, and she applied for admission, for the first time, to feed with the Lord's flock. She was gladly welcomed by her pastor, for she could give a good reason for her hope. The day set apart among Presbyterians, for humiliation and prayer previous to the dispensation of the Sacrament, had arrived. It opened on her in brightness, but closed amidst the deepest shadows. A sermon she heard that day unveiled her sinfulness to her own eyes as she had never seen it before. Groans and tears were now her portion, and she was almost in despair. She still, however, clung to Christ, hoping against hope. On the Communion Sabbath, amidst much mental conflict, she took her place at the Lord's Table ; but no ray of loving light pierced the darkness which brooded over her spirit. For many weeks the gloom continued. Ever and anon she was

getting a new view of 'the hidden evils of her heart,' and was called to sustain fresh assaults by the Arch-Enemy of souls. She came to my informant one night, weeping bitterly. He spoke very affectionately and soothingly to her, and asked the cause of her tears. 'I am so vile,' she replied. 'I want to be Christ's. I wish to do His will in all things. It is comparatively easy to keep the outside clean, but my heart, oh! it is so polluted, I don't know what to do! I don't want to be a hypocrite. I would like to serve Jesus sincerely, but I cannot do it, because I am so corrupt within.' The gentleman did his best to comfort her. He pointed her to Paul's experience when he cried out in anguish, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' He encouraged her to cling to Jesus, and assured her that her Almighty Friend would bring her safely through every difficulty into the light of His countenance."

"Are you aware, Mr. Bruce, how she progressed afterwards?" said I.

"O yes! She continued staying herself on her Saviour-God amid the darkness, fighting against sin and Satan as best she could, and ever crying for help. Now and again she got a glimpse of light, and ultimately emerged from the cloud. Her experience was effective in making her a very tender-hearted, humble-minded disciple; and I know that she is to this day steadily walking in the narrow way, and sowing the good

seed in the minds of all to whom she has access."

"This young woman's experience was very severe," observed Mr. Milligan; "but the Great Husbandman knows best how to prune and train His vines."

"True," answered Mr. Bruce; "the end of the Lord always proves the exceeding wisdom and love of all His dealings with us. Our wayward inclinations and proud hearts often demand painful operations; and though we may at first be drawn to Christ by the cords of love, we shall some time or other be made to abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. We must be stripped of pride, and thoroughly abased in our own eyes, and the necessary processes of discipline are all arranged for by Him who watches our every step. Bunyan, with Heaven-taught wisdom, mapped out the Valley of Humiliation, and the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where Christian was so terribly beset, as being a long way within the Wicket Gate, and the spot where the Pilgrim was freed from the burden of his sins. My own experience confirms my opinion, and I have heard of many cases agreeing in the main, though circumstantially different. One I recall, of rather an interesting kind."

"I greatly wish to hear it," said Mr. Milligan; and so our old friend proceeded with his narrative:—

"The case referred to was that of an intimate friend of mine, a gentleman who was for many

years before his death a zealous Sabbath-school teacher, and an elder in a Presbyterian church. As with myself, his entrance on the Christian life was pleasant, and not till years had passed, had he to travel through dense clouds of darkness and conflict. Before his fellow-men his walk was on the whole consistent; but being of rather an ardent, impulsive nature, he was too apt to yield to worldly influences.

"He had thus often to confess on his knees his shortcomings and transgressions. Against the plagues of his own heart he at such times appealed to his Father in heaven. He spread them out and wept over them at the throne of grace, and entreated pardon for past offences, and help for the time to come. Frequently, however, he became unwatchful, and then he was so far overcome of evil; but his immediate return to God prevented any continued loss of faith and hope.

"For a period of years these ups and downs marked the life of my friend. On the whole he was gaining in the battle against his besetting sins. At times, however, he wondered whether he should ever conquer entirely; but he had little fear as to ultimate victory, so long as he kept his eye firmly fixed on Jesus. Whenever he tried to walk in his own strength, he was taught by bitter experience that in himself there was no stability.

"At length, having one day neglected in a particular matter his duty to God, he fell under deeper convictions of guilt than he had ever

experienced before. His sins of heart and life, from childhood upwards, were set in order before his eyes. His shameful disobedience and ingratitude, his transgressions against light and against love, were pressed home. His apparently small success in bringing sinners to Christ was charged to his worldly conformity and want of purity in heart. Outward circumstances tended to deepen the distress, and it increased day by day. Then came serious questionings, 'Can you be a Christian at all? If so, why these frequent lapses into worldly courses during so many years? Surely your profession of religion has been all a sham?'

"The conflict deepened. One night my friend was alone in his house. He sat meditating on his condition. It seemed as if some being were whispering into his ear, the suggestions were so plainly put before his mind. They were to this effect:—'You a Sabbath-school teacher! You an elder of the Church! You trying to bring others to Christ! You are only dishonouring the Saviour and the Church by your profession! You have a corrupt, unchanged heart! Look at your past life, as God sees it, and say if you have not been deceiving everybody, and yourself as well! Give up, hypocrite! Resign your offices in the Church and Sabbath-school! Make no more false professions! Get out from among the followers of Christ, and dishonour God no longer!'

"My friend was exceedingly distressed. He

tried to pray, but found no relief. He wept, and endeavoured to make supplication, but no ray of light pierced the gloom. His conscience, too, echoed every accusation, and he was indeed self-condemned. Yet he struggled to get hold of Christ, and cling to Him. To return to the world was to perish. To remain in sadness and darkness was to fall into despair. He could go only to the One Helper; and yet the Lord seemed as if He had shut up the bowels of His compassion.

"Some hours passed amid attempts to pray; but they were fruitless, so far as attaining comfort was concerned. The accusations were pouring unceasingly into my friend's soul, and it seemed as if he were given over to death. It was long past the usual time for retiring, and, as a duty, he at length went to bed, but not to sleep. The voice spoke louder than before, 'Give up, hypocrite! Pollute God's house no more by your presence! You never came honestly to Christ for yourself! Dishonour Him no more by pretending to invite others to Him!'

"My poor friend was almost at his wits' end. He was bedewing his pillow with tears, and still striving to cry for pardon and deliverance from his righteously offended God. He realized God's holiness more than ever before, and felt himself more awfully vile than language could describe; yet he was not willing to give up all hope, or to cease trying to benefit others. More intensely

than ever the words rung in the ears of his heart, 'Wretched, hypocritical worldling, defile the Christian assembly no longer! Abandon all your professions! Mock God no more, for you are certainly on the highroad to perdition!'

"Somehow my friend got power to reply to the accuser. The words he employed were to this effect:—'Alas! it is all too true that I am so very wicked, and have sinned so grievously. The blood of Christ can, however, cleanse even me, and I will try to seek the pardon and the purity I need from Jesus. *But if I am to perish, I will perish entreating sinners to flee to the Saviour. I will not give up trying to help others on to heaven, even if I must go to hell myself.*'

"*That* was the turning-point of my friend's deliverance. It seemed as if some spiritual foe, that had been close beside him all that afternoon and night, then took his departure; and from that hour my friend attained greater strength against his besetting sins. He was enabled to walk more humbly and closely with God, and was much more blessed than before, in benefiting the souls committed to his care."

"I should think your friend's experience was rather extraordinary," said Mr. Milligan.

"I daresay it was rather uncommon," was Mr. Bruce's answer. "But many Christians have similar conflicts, though perhaps not so definite or protracted. I am certain, however, of this, that in the fight against sin, every honest follower

of Jesus has occasionally a severe struggle, which is all the more bitter and prolonged, if the evil suggestion has found the slightest welcome. An example occurs in an epistle I had from one who, while he lived, laboured hard for Christ."

Selecting a letter from a drawer at hand, Mr. Bruce read as follows :—

"A considerable time since I was much interested in a young person's spiritual welfare, and for months exerted myself to lead her to the Saviour. At my request she came to call on me one evening, and to my surprise told me that the previous night she had found peace in believing. While engaged singing a hymn, with other attendants at a prayer-meeting in the neighbourhood of her father's house, she said the truth had flashed upon her, and she found rest in Christ. We had a long and pleasant conversation, and then she left for home. She was scarcely out of my dining-room till the wicked thought was suggested to my mind, 'Was it not unkind and unfair in God to deny you the satisfaction of leading this girl to peace? How you have laboured for her welfare! How you have prayed for her enlightenment! And, after all, you have not been honoured to be the instrument to open her eyes!'

"My envious, rebellious heart was too ready to give admission to the abominable thought. I caught myself actually 'rolling it (as it were) under my tongue;' but suddenly its awful heinous-

ness burst upon me, and I tried to drive it out of my heart. I hastened to my closet to pray, but with no avail. The hour for family worship came, and I went through with the service, but was worried all the time by the foe within. Again and again I tried secret prayer, but could not stamp out the fire of fretfulness and discontent, which I had helped to kindle in my bosom. The evil thought kept hold of me till I lay down; it awoke and arose with me in the morning. Through secret and family prayer it again went with me. It served to humble me in the dust before my all-gracious Father in heaven. It made me feel how base, how ungrateful, how presumptuous I was; but though I wished most earnestly, and struggled most determinedly, to get rid of my perverse and rebellious feeling, it would not go at my bidding. I hastened to business. Like oil upon water, the evil in me rose above everything. I had much correspondence that day to overtake, and the presence of the wickedness within me kept me greatly back. Ever and anon as I sat at my desk, I sent up a cry to Jesus; but it was far on in the afternoon before my inward enemy departed, and my spirit attained again to joyful acquiescence in the will and way of my God."

"I daresay your correspondent would watch better in future," remarked Mr. Milligan.

"Yes, indeed! He was taught pretty effectively that the only way to prevent protracted fighting, is never to ask an evil thought to sit down in your

heart; but the moment it shows its face, to cry for help to Christ, and bundle it out of the door. Whether temptation comes from without or from within, the rule is equally applicable. The oft-repeated warning of our Lord, to 'watch and pray,' requires to be remembered by the most advanced Christian; for the vitality of sin is indeed amazing."

"Do you think, Mr. Bruce, it is so with all disciples of Jesus?" asked L.

"I have no doubt it is," was the reply. "I think that the old corrupt inclinations within us are like the germs of weeds, which, even in the best cultivated garden, are ready to spring and blossom at every favourable opportunity. You remember Paul's observation regarding himself, after he had been more than twenty years a most devoted follower of the Lamb:—'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway' (1 Cor. ix. 27). As to my own case, I have frequent occasion to fight against the same evil desires which, I remember, assaulted me more than forty years ago. Sometimes my old nature rises so high, that I would be utterly ashamed if any fellow-creature beheld it. Knowing the infinite love of my Saviour's heart, and the almighty power of His arm, I find both comfort and deliverance in spreading all out before His face, and petitioning for succour."

"I am exceedingly grateful for your conver-

OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

sation to-night, Mr. Bruce," was Mr. Mil-
response. "You have comforted and encour-
me more than I can find words to express.
myself occasionally so very unworthy, that
see little or no ground to call myself a Ch-
at all. But now I find that I am not alone
experience; and I trust I shall have grace
me to 'fight the good fight of faith, and la-
on eternal life.'"

"I am very happy, my dear friend," an-
Mr. Bruce, "that our conversation has, un-
tionally on my part, been of benefit to
think Christians often lose the getting a-
giving of a great deal of good, by keepin-
experiences so much to themselves. If
more frank, we would be more useful
other; and we would certainly find that,
water face answereth to face, so the heart
to man.'

"In regard to the sin that dwelleth in us, there
is no fear but we shall overcome, if, looking unto
the Captain of our salvation, we continue unto
battle. As Samuel Rutherford wrote to Lady
Boyd, 'Be sorry at corruption, and be not secure.
That companion lay with you in your mother's
womb, and was as early friends with you as the
breath of life. And Christ will not have it other-
wise; for He delighteth to take up fallen bairns,
and to mend broken brows: binding up of wounds,
is His office. Our pride must have winter weather
to rot it; but fear not. The sea-sick passenger

shall come safe to land, and Christ Himself will be the first to meet you on the shore.' ”

The striking of a clock at this moment announced to Mr. Milligan and myself that it was time to leave. We had been both so much interested that some hours had fled imperceptibly. The quickening which our faith and hope had received was the subject of mutual congratulation as we walked homewards, after tendering to Mr. Bruce our warmest thanks. May the reproduction of the conversation here prove equally useful to my reader, and may he be a partaker of the promise —“ Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law but under grace.”

DIVINE RECIPES FOR PROMOTING SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

RECIPE FIRST.

“**H**ELP me to praise Him,” said my dear old friend, Mrs. Fordglass, when I asked her one day whether I could be helpful in any matter. She had been long a faithful but much-trying disciple of Christ, and strove to walk in all His commandments and ordinances blameless. Through the misconduct of her nearest relatives, she had however been much chastened for many years; and as her temperament was naturally anxious, it will not surprise my reader to be informed that her afflictions told severely on her, and gave her many errands to the throne of grace. Scarcely ever had I called upon her without finding her mourning under some fresh sorrow, and without being pressed to remember her case in prayer. But on the occasion to which I have referred, though to human vision the prospect was gloomy as ever, her faith on buoyant wing was rising into the clear sun-light above the earthly clouds, and lark-like pouring out its thanksgivings. Weeping had continued during a dreary night of trial, but joy

had come at length as with morning songs. No petition now for prayer. Her only request was, "Help me to praise Him."

It seemed to me afterwards that Mrs. Fordglass had already begun to tune her harp, that she might be in readiness to join the choir of the ransomed in glory. Some rays of Heaven's own comfort were beaming with unwonted power on her spirit, and evolving the sweet incense of grateful love. Some angel hand was beckoning her away to joys that never end ; but ere she left, she wished to set us agoing at the employment which so well becomes those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The call to praise was at least my old friend's latest request. In a few days thereafter, the love-paved chariot came for this daughter of Jerusalem, and she was conveyed with gladness into the palace of the King.

It is a great glory to our Master when "faith exalts her joyful voice, and begins to sing," and her hopeful strains are peculiarly encouraging to the weak and timid. What child of God can read Habakkuk's melody without a thrill of sympathy, and an effort to join in the song? "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." And the utterances of Paul's happy confiding

spirit, too, how they tend to draw us up into the same region of grateful repose and joy! "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. In *every* thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."

But some one may say, "Ah! these men were far above me in privilege. I can never hope to rise to the same height as a prophet or an apostle."

Come with me, dear friend, across this moor to the old cottage on its further edge, which is fast falling into decay, and has only one aged woman for its inhabitant. She has but a mere pittance on which to sustain life, but she is at peace with God through faith in His Son, her dearly loved Redeemer. As we approach we hear her voice; and we creep silently to her door, and peep in through a weather-worn chink in the decaying timber. We see a strange sight. On an old chair, which serves betimes as either a seat or a table, is a small piece of coarse bread, and a cupful of cold water. It is all that she can afford for her evening meal. She is kneeling before the chair, with uplifted eyes brimming over with the tears of grateful love, and her lips are moving. She is evidently giving thanks for the provision; and as we listen attentively we catch words which reveal the secret of her peace and joy—"All this, O Lord; all this, and heaven too!"

After contemplating such a picture, let no man

say that a thankful, hopeful spirit is not, through grace, within his reach.

"A flame of praise lit up in the heart burns up the dross of unbelief and discontent in a wonderful way," and He who knows what is good for us has not left us without a specific injunction on the subject :—"Be filled with the Spirit ; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. v. 18, 19).

If this precept applies to public or social worship, I am well satisfied it does not apply *exclusively* to praise uttered in company with others. It is at least equally binding as a directory for the individual when alone in the closet, or at his work, or as he wends his way along city thoroughfares, or by a quiet country road. It is not meant that he should sing aloud so as to attract attention. He can hum a melody in the midst of a crowd, so as to be heard only by his God and himself. If the heart is engaged, the result will be found to be peculiarly pleasant and profitable. Let us consider how benefit is obtained by this singing to the Lord :—

First, Like David's music with Saul, it soothes the perturbed soul. When Charlotte Brontë's father was irritated, he used to calm himself by shooting for a while with a pistol from the back-door of his parsonage. Most people would, however, find music more advantageous. Bishop Beveridge's experience is quite in point. Speak-

ing of music, especially when he played himself, he remarked, "It calls in my spirits, composes my thoughts, delights my ear, recreates my mind, and so not only fits me for after business, but fills my heart at the present with pure and useful thoughts." The same happy result was manifest in the household of another worthy clergyman, who had a large family of daughters. Amongst other branches of education, he was careful to have them all well grounded in the theory and practice of music. Their happy and amiable behaviour attracted general attention; and when an intimate acquaintance once asked their father, whether he had discovered any peculiar method by which such agreeable results were attained, he replied, "When anything disturbs their temper, I ask them to sing; and if I hear them speaking against any person, I immediately request some music; and so they have sung away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal."

If music and ordinary song can produce such happy effects, much more influential are melodious airs when joined with the truth of God. "Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," convey to the wounded heart the sobthing, healing balm of Gilead; and there is no quicker and better method of attaining the repose which they are calculated to impart, than by each one singing them to himself, and making melody in his heart to the Lord.

Second, The singing of spiritual songs sets faith a-working. "Strengthen this grace of faith,"

said the pious Hooker, "and you will strengthen every other grace." In psalms and hymns the character and the loving-kindnesses of our God in Christ to sinners are largely portrayed; and we cannot sing such melodies with any appreciation at all, without being lifted up by the consideration of what God is, and what He has done for us, into an elevated and peaceful region. Moreover, they frequently give occasion for the most lively acts of appropriating faith. For example, the opening of the 18th Psalm (Rous's version) :—

"Thee will I love, O Lord, my strength.
My fortress is the Lord,
My rock, and he that doth to me
Deliverance afford :
My God, my strength, whom I will trust,
A buckler unto me,
The horn of my salvation,
And my high tower, is he."

Or that of the 27th Psalm :—

"The Lord's my light and saving health,
Who shall make me dismay'd ?
My life's strength is the Lord, of whom
Then shall I be afraid ?"

Or some portions of the 62d Psalm. I quote only one verse, the 7th :—

"In God my glory placed is,
And my salvation sure ;
In God the rock is of my strength,
My refuge most secure."

Among uninspired hymns, the same feature is

largely developed. For examples, let me quote a very few verses. And first, from Charles Wesley's "Jesus our Refuge :"—

"Jesus, lover of my soul !
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,
 While the nearer waters roll,
 While the tempest still is high.
 Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life be past ;
 Safe into the haven guide,
 O receive my soul at last."

Second, from Newton's "Name of Jesus :"—

"Dear Name ! the rock on which I build,
 My shield and hiding-place,
 My never-failing treasury, filled
 With boundless stores of grace.
 Jesus ! my Saviour, Shepherd, Friend,
 My Prophet, Priest, and King,
 My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
 Accept the praise I bring."

And last, from "My Jesus, I love Thee :"—

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
 For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign,
 My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou,
 If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now !

I love Thee, because Thou hast first loved me,
 And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree ;
 I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow,
 If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now !"

Every reader knows how in the "Rock of Ages" by Toplady, "The Fountain" by Cowper,

in the old Independent hymn "The Land of Canaan," in "Just as I am," and indeed in the whole circle of songs and hymns worthy of the title "*Spiritual*," the same feature more or less obtains. As the heart goes out in these melodies, it finds and grasps the Lord Christ, freely presented in the promises of the Gospel. He is the bread of life, and thus the mouth of the soul feeds on Him and finds strength. He is the water of life, and thus the spirit of man drinks and is refreshed. Let my reader test the matter experimentally, if he has not done so before. Let him sing to himself, in appropriate melodies, the psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, of the Divine Word, or those which godly poets have based on the Heavenly Revelation; let him especially employ those which, like the specimens I have given, embrace the living Christ, and cleave to Him as with full purpose of heart, and, ere ever he is aware, his soul will be rising on buoyant pinions above the mists and the troubles of earth. He will find these songs of Zion to be indeed the wings of a dove, with which he can fly away and be at rest in the bosom of his Saviour-God.

Third, As Christ is embraced, the Spirit's indwelling is secured. "Be filled with the Spirit,"—how? "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (heart) shall flow rivers of living

water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." The way then to insure our being filled with the Spirit, is to lay hold upon Jesus, and cling closely to Him.

We are told that at the consecration of Solomon's temple, when "the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

Thus the glory of Divine Love is revealed in the heart that warbles forth its song of praise. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Whoso offereth praise glorifieth the Lord, and He will manifest Himself to us as we endeavour to glorify Him. Nay, more, faith in its cleaving to Jesus opens and enlarges the channel for the inflow of the Spirit of Christ into the heart; and the more we are filled with the Holy Ghost, the more completely is the kingdom of "righteousness, and peace, and joy" established and extended within us.

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." There is no better way

of responding to this invitation of Isaiah than to sing much in our hearts to Him who loved us. So shall we follow Jesus closely; and He has Himself declared, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The enjoyment of His presence will make earthly troubles and trials comparatively easy; nay, we shall be able to glory in infirmities, when thus the power of Christ rests upon us.

The true believer, however, desires more than personal gratification. He wishes to live to the praise of his Creator and Redeemer. He longs for the extension of the kingdom of grace, and delights when sinners are attracted to the Saviour. For this reason, then, it is imperative on him to see to his own spiritual health and happiness. If he is gloomy, or sour, or fretful, what can those who are without think of religion? It is by the fascination of worldly pleasures that the deceiver of man lures on souls to destruction; and shall those who know the joyful sound, and have become children of the King of Heaven, walk morosely or sorrowfully through the earth, and thus disgrace the name by which they are called? The joy of the Lord is no fitful flash, but a steady light. The peace which He gives passeth all understanding. And if those who are yet far from God were made to feel that the religion of Jesus affords in all circumstances a support, a comfort, an enjoyment vastly beyond all they have

ever found,—might they not, would they not, be more frequently “asking their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward”?

Let us, then, who bear the name of Jesus, not be walking wilfully in darkness while the Sun of Righteousness is brightly shining. If we seek to rise above the clouds of unbelief and the mists of an evil conscience into the clear light of His changeless love, we shall ere long be both warmed and cheered; and therefore let us constantly aim after the fulfilment of the precept, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

RECIPE SECOND.

A Christian is to my mind not unfitly represented by a water cistern, such as may be found in almost every house in the city where I dwell. For its supply the cistern is entirely dependent on a Highland lake many miles away. By an aqueduct and pipes the water is conveyed fresh and pure to every dwelling. When the cistern is full, a valve shuts off the inflowing current, and it ceases entirely. If the water in the cistern is frozen, nothing can be given out, and neither can more flow in. The water may, however, be perfectly free to flow, but from some obstruction none may be dispensed. If this continues long, the water in the cistern will become

corrupt and unwholesome. The family will get no advantage, and the cistern will be full of impurity. Let, however, the water flow by the right channel, and become a refresher and a purifier in the household, and then the more the cistern gives out, the more will it be able to take in. It must get before it can give ; and then giving, it becomes capable of receiving additional and continuous supplies.

The heart into which the love of God has been received is like a cistern, such as I have described. It was empty once ; but Infinite Wisdom devised a channel through which it might be replenished with the water of life. By faith, as a pipe, it came into communication with the Heavenly Fountain, and so it has been filled. And the law for its continued health and happiness is briefly summed up in the words, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8). If there is selfish hoarding, elements of evil will be speedily engendered. If there is a proper outflow, there will be salutary circulation, and a supply from the Fountain-head. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

"The joy of the Lord is the strength of a Christian." I have, therefore, placed first the recipe which directs to heart-melody. We must not, however, stop with singing ; but, being happy in spirit, find outgates for our love. We may give good words, or good deeds, or things that may be useful to the bodies or souls of others ; but giving

in some wise fashion is a necessity, if our spiritual life is to be maintained in vigour.

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” In such expressions of sympathy, there are channels deep and broad enough for the love of all to flow out by ; and none can thus manifest an honest regard for others, without feeling themselves refreshed. We may not be able to say much ; but true affection will make itself known ; and mourning hearts, especially, will realize the support and the comfort which a true sympathy confers.

Among good words none are so beneficial to others, or so profitable to ourselves, as those in which we seek to commend the love of Christ for acceptance. I can honestly testify, that never have I got for myself such a firm hold of the Saviour, as when endeavouring to draw others to Him. The attempt to exhibit His condescension, His tenderness, His readiness to receive sinners, with the perfection of His salvation and the rich promises of His grace, effectually illumined and vivified every point to my own mind ; and my effort to speak *for* Him strengthened my own faith *in* Him.

As in the physical and mental department of our nature, so it is in the spiritual,—exercise is indispensable for the maintenance of health. It is in no unkindness then that to every son God addresses the command, “Go, work to-day in my vineyard.” If his heart is enlarged by his Father’s

love, the son will run to fulfil the order ; and as he works not *for* love, but *from* it, every hour he spends in labour will strengthen his spirit life, and increase his capacity for enjoying more the love, which first set him to exert his powers for the glory of God and the good of men.

The deeds of love may be very various ; but they are valuable, not as they bulk in the eyes of men, but as they are true expressions of devoted affection to Jesus. A poor woman, who washes out a sick neighbour's kitchen, may do a greater thing in God's estimation than he who builds an hospital.

The same rule obtains in regard to giving of the money or the goods which we possess, for the supply of the need of others. She who cast two mites into the treasury was more commended than they who cast in their gold ; and in the beneficial result to her own soul, she had a far richer reward than they. "It is more blessed," said Jesus, "to give than to receive ;" and when she had parted with *all her living* because she loved her Lord, her heart would be filled with a deeper joy than she had before experienced, or was possible for those who loved less than she.

Love delights in sacrificing to the object loved ; and the more this appetite is indulged the greater is the enjoyment. When we have tasted God's love to us, we must find opportunities for showing how much we appreciate His goodness. If we do not, we starve our natures,—the capacity to enjoy

God's love being dependent on our exercising love in the way He directs. No wonder then that many professing Christians are so small in spiritual stature, so feeble in spiritual health. Their lives are spent chiefly in thought and labour for themselves. They give little and casually for the promotion of God's cause in the world, or for the relief of the needy ; and since the stream of actual love which issues from their hearts is so fitful, and so diminutive at the best, the supply of the water of life to them is correspondingly irregular and circumscribed. They work so little for God, that the spiritual man cannot attain to the vigour and elasticity of buoyant health. I speak not now of the poor reward they shall have at last, according to the law that only he who soweth bountifully shall reap abundantly. I refer merely to the unhealthiness and the unhappiness, which their want of devotion produces and entails upon themselves.

No one who has tasted the luxury of doing good under the constraining influence of Christ's love to himself, will question the beneficial results of it to his own higher nature. He enters, though in finite measure, into the joy which God the Father and God the Son have in ministering to our wants as creatures and as sinners ; and as his heart enlarges with the exercise, he is the better able to apprehend the "love that passeth knowledge."

If, then, my reader would like to be healthy

and happy as a Christian, let him learn to give freely because he has so received. When David and his people had poured out with amazing abundance their offerings for the building of the temple, it is said, "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy." It was in no huckstering spirit the gifts were presented; they were no attempts to buy God's favour, but gifts from children to a Father, to whose love they owed all they had. Hear David's thanksgiving on the occasion:—"Who am I, and what is my people, that we should *be able* (in the margin, *obtain strength*) to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. xxix. 9, 14).

The same spirit characterized the Pentecostal converts. When God's great love was revealed to them, their hearts gushed out in streams of love to those around. "They sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need; and they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people" (Acts ii. 45, 47).

"Pour forth the oil, pour boldly forth,
It will not fail until
Thou fairest vessels to provide,
Which it may largely fill.

But then, when such are found no more,
 Though flowing broad and free
 Till then, and nourished from on high,
 It straightway stanch'd will be.

Dig channels for the streams of love,
 Where they may broadly run ;
 And love has overflowing streams
 To fill them every one.

But if at any time thou cease
 Such channels to provide,
 The very founts of love for thee
 Will soon be parched and dried.

For we must share if we would keep
 That good thing from above ;
 Ceasing to give we cease to have—
 Such is the law of love." *

To enjoy giving, we must first drink often and much from the river of love which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Then we shall pour out freely our love and our love-gifts upon others, as necessity requires ; and as we give forth the stream that blesses and benefits our neighbours, we shall be daily enjoying with increasing relish the matchless love of God to ourselves.

"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men ; to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13).

* Archbishop Trench.

I have been addressing the living, or those at least who profess to be alive unto God. There is no use in calling upon the dead to praise the Lord, or to show their love to Him by doing good to all as they have opportunity. I do not deny that those who are still unreconciled to God may join with their lips in singing psalms and hymns; but the service is vain until they truly lay hold on Christ as their life. It is a mockery to say "The Lord is *my* shepherd," if I don't want His loving care, and refuse to let Him lead me and guide me. Gifts to the poor or subscriptions to the cause of Christ are of no spiritual benefit to the giver who is without love to the Saviour. They may be proofs of a naturally generous disposition; but they are only splendid sins after all;—the self-willed operations of rebels, who reject the authority and refuse the grace of Him, by whose bounty and whose power they are continually sustained.

The first duty of the creature is to see that he is in a right relation with his Creator. Guilty sinners, as we all are, must be at peace with God, before they can serve with the happy spirit of dear children. The way is already open. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" and the Gospel call to sinners is, "Be ye reconciled to God. The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"*Come* now, therefore, and I will *send* thee," said the great I AM to Moses at the burning

bush. To you also, dear reader, is the word of this salvation sent. Come to your Father in Jesus, and let Him fill you with His love ; and then He will send you forth, to glorify Him on earth by songs of praise and deeds of beneficence.

THE GOSPEL IN SYMBOL : SOME BRIEF
THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EUCHARIST.

THE Gospel is the good tidings of great joy which the angel proclaimed in the plain of Bethlehem—"Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The first notes of the cheering news were given even before our first parents were expelled from Eden, in the promise that the seed of the woman should yet bruise the serpent's head. As the centuries rolled past, intimations of the grace of God increased in number and in distinctness of utterance; but not till the Heaven-provided Lamb had been actually offered as a sacrifice for sin, did the melody swell out into full proportion, and fall with unmistakeable clearness on the ears of men. Then it became manifest, how "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord;" and the heralds of mercy announced to Jew and Gentile alike, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The Lord's Supper is the Gospel in symbol.

In the broken bread Christ is represented to us. It is the type of Himself crucified and slain for our sins. By this one sacrifice He secured God's "favour, which is life," for all who are united to Him. In the Supper, He holds out the bread as the symbol of Himself to us. He says, "Take, eat." It is just the same as saying, "Poor needy one, lost by nature, I give Myself to thee. Lay hold of Me. Take Me to thy heart. Claim Me, and cleave to Me as thy life. As sure as I put this bread into thy hand, so surely do I give Myself to thee. As certainly as thy hand clasps the bread, and thy mouth feeds on it to the support of thy body, so certainly mayest thou count Myself and all My benefits as made over to thee for the eternal life of thy soul. Receive Me into thy innermost heart of love, and say confidently, 'Now I have found a friend—Jesus is mine!'"

The same blessed truth is shown in the cup of wine, given freely, like the bread, "without money, without price," for the refreshment of the weary. As the bread pictures Christ our life and strength, the wine exhibits Him as our consolation and our joy. When He says, "Drink ye all of it," it is just a conveyance of Himself to us; and we are each entitled to lay hold and exclaim, "My Saviour-God is mine! He gives Himself to me. I welcome Him as all my salvation and all my desire."

The Lord's Supper is thus the Gospel in symbol, exhibiting Christ as the life and joy of sinners, and as given by Himself to us. By our actions there, however, we profess to accept the gift; and thus the Supper not only pictures the Gospel as *offering* a full Christ, but it exhibits *our closing with the offer*, our reception of the Saviour into the heart. We take the bread and wine. We eat and drink. By so doing, each communicant proclaims to all onlookers, visible and invisible, "I accept Christ as mine. I count Him needful and nourishing for my soul as bread for my body. I value His death in my room, as more cheering to my spirit than wine to my mortal frame. I welcome Him to the throne of my affections. Without Him I die for ever. Having Him as mine, I have peace with God and a home in glory, for Jesus has secured them both. Christ is mine; for He has given me Himself again, with these symbols of His broken body and shed blood; and joyfully do I again accept Him. And I am Christ's; for again do I give myself over to Him to be saved from wrath and sin, to be filled with His love, and to be brought safe to heaven."

What a sweetly solemn transaction, then, is every approach to the Table of the Lord! Who are, who alone can be welcome guests? Those who do not care for Christ, who do not want His love, who like His gifts very well, but do not desire to be ever near and ever consecrated to Him? Ah, no! Whoever comes to the Supper, valuing any person

or thing more than Jesus, is a hypocritical mocker, and has no right there. No matter how solemn the face, how grave the manner, how humble the appearance, if we are not willing to part with all rather than part with Jesus, we have no right whatever at His Table. Our coming to it while we are set on idols of earth, or even with divided minds, can only harden our hearts and deepen our condemnation.

No fearing, trembling one ought to stay away from the feast, if the desire of his heart is towards Jesus. Do you count His love better than life? Do you really wish to be wholly His,—to be taken up in His arms as a poor lame lamb, and carried home to the fold? Would you like to be done with sinning, and to serve Him for ever with a perfect heart? Would you willingly cast everything behind your back, if only you might be His, and feel Him near? Then, however often you may have fallen under temptation, He has a cordial welcome for you. Your thirsty soul shall not lack refreshment at the Table of your Lord.

I remember asking, some thirty years ago, a dear old disciple, eminent for piety, and a very Nathanael in spirit, as to the proper engagement of mind while at the table. I wondered whether it was necessary or desirable to attend to every word of the addresses, given before and after the distribution of the elements. My friend answered that "we might get much to help us in these addresses; but that he believed the highest

spiritual exercise at the Lord's Table was to be so entirely taken up with thinking about Jesus and His dying love, and in whispering our love to Him, as perhaps hardly to hear a word of what the presiding minister might say."

The more I have reflected on it, the more I am convinced that at the Gospel banquet it is best to see "Jesus only;"—to forget the servants in the contemplation of the Master, who endured untold agonies on our behalf. As we break and eat the bread, and lay hold on and drink from the cup, we may be most profitably engaged in thinking of the mangled body and poured-out blood of the Lord of life, and in considering the wondrous love which brought Him from the ineffable glory of heaven to the manger, and the cross, and the grave, and because of which He wears, and ever will wear, a scarred human body on the throne of the universe. At such a time we will mourn, because we have so often grieved and wounded Him afresh by our transgressions; yet with tearful eyes, we will seek to "receive the broken Christ into our broken hearts, and a whole Christ, Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, with our whole hearts." Then also should we yield ourselves entirely to Him, so that He may by His Spirit mould us to His will, and cause us to shine as mirrors, reflecting on a dark world His own blessed light. May we not also imitate Queen Esther at the banquet of wine, and plead for others as well as for ourselves? "What is thy

petition?" said Ahasuerus to her; "and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom." To all His trusting children Jesus says still more:—"Concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. Ask, and ye shall receive." With such encouraging promises, and when face to face with Him as His guests, let us ask and receive, that our joy may be full.

As to the spirit in which a welcome communicant should approach this ordinance, some hints may be found in the following meditation.

A MEDITATION IN VIEW OF THE LORD'S
SUPPER.

"I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only."—PSALM LXXI. 16.

WHERE *shall I go?* I will go to the Table of my Lord. He did not refuse to go for me for thirty-three long years under the burden of my guilt, and to "bear my sins in his own body on the tree." He toiled along the weary way to Calvary, and up to the Cross itself. There He endured the wrath of Infinite Justice, and drank to the dregs the bitter cup of anguish; and all that He might offer me, vile, worthless, rebellious me, free pardon and eternal life,—and spread a table of refreshment for me,—and give me bread of heaven and wine of everlasting consolation, to strengthen me as I journey to the happy home which He has Himself purchased for me. Yes! I will go,—to remember Him who forgot me not, who forgets me never; I will go, to confess Him as the chiefest among ten thousand, as the altogether lovely. I will go, to proclaim Him as all my salvation and as all my desire—as the everlasting portion of my spirit, the joy of my heart, the bridegroom of my soul.

WHEN shall I go ? Whenever in His providence He spreads the Table, I will go ; and not many days hence I shall have another opportunity. Gladly will I embrace it. But have I not been cold to Him many times since last Communion day ? Have I not slidden back, and fallen into the mire of sin ? Too true, O my soul ; and He knows it all. I would not hide it from Him. I shall spread before Him all my sins against light and love. I shall lay bare before Him all my presumptuous offences. I shall ask Him to search me through and through as with lighted candles. I will not deal deceitfully with Him. I will beseech Him to strip off every disguise, to make me true and pure, to tear up and cast out every root of bitterness from my heart. I shall seek the sprinkling of His blood to take away my guilt, and a renewed baptism of His Spirit to quicken grace within, and make me more contrite, more humble, and more full of love to Him who first loved me. This will I do in secret again and again during the intervening days ; and aiming at the same self-condemning and Christ-glorifying exercise, I will go to the Supper of the Lord.

WHY will I go ? Not because I am good ; for, alas ! in me by nature dwelleth no good thing. Not because I have made some advance in holiness ; for, alas ! I am in myself only "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked ;" and at my best a "guilty, weak, and helpless worm." But I will go because I need a Saviour ;

because Jesus is the very Saviour I require,—a Saviour from wrath and sin. I have discovered that He gives Himself to whosoever will have Him ; and with all the power of my heart I have laid hold on Him as mine. In my closet I have solemnly and deliberately given myself over to Him to be saved ; and He tells me to confess the betrothal before all who care to know. I will go, moreover, because I need to have my hatred of sin increased, and to obtain more spiritual power for the contest with evil. I will go, because I wish to get advancement in all grace, and to make progress heavenward. Nay more,—I will go, because it was His dying request that we should do this thing in remembrance of Him. To sit at His Table, to gaze on the memorials of His death, to look through them to Him whose love passeth knowledge, to eat of His fruit, to drink the wine of the kingdom,—surely the prospect of such a Feast should arouse and intensify every spiritual desire within me ! And since He so tenderly invites to it every poor and needy sinner, that has fled for refuge under the shadow of His wings, I will go and take my place among the ransomed of the Lord.

How *shall I go* ? I will go in the strength of the Lord God—my Saviour-God. Like Reuben, I am unstable as water ; and in myself no strength, no grace can be found. Jesus alone can give “the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue ;” and He has promised that “His

grace shall be sufficient for me, and that his strength shall be perfected in my weakness." I will therefore go, leaning on the arm of the Beloved of my soul, confiding in His power to subdue me to Himself, to supply all my soul's necessities, and to restrain all my spiritual foes. I will go, looking unto Jesus, the Captain of my salvation. "The Lord liveth; blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."

And of WHAT shall I think and speak as I go to His Table, and sit with the flock of God? I will make mention of Thy righteousness, O Jesus, even of Thine only! My righteousnesses are all filthy rags. I cast them with utter abhorrence away. I fly to the fountain of my Saviour's blood to wash off my foul guiltiness. I seek the robe of my Redeemer's obedience, His righteous obedience in my stead, in which to enwrap myself from head to foot.

"Christ's blood and righteousness
Shall be the marriage dress,
In which I'll stand
At God's right hand,
Forgiven;
And enter rest,
Among the blest
In heaven."*

In this "clothing of wrought gold," I will approach the Table. It is the true wedding-garment, clad in which alone we can be acceptable

* Arndt—translated by Rev. W. Arnot.

at the marriage-supper. God's piercing eye can detect no flaw in it. When the King comes in to see the guests, He will welcome all who have it on. By faith then will I wrap me in my Lord's righteousness, and I will go singing with tearful love to His Table. And this shall be my song :—

“I count all things but loss and dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. In God is my salvation and my glory ; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.”

“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

“The Lord will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.”

DEATH WELCOME

MANY years ago I was frequently called to watch by the dying-bed of a young and much-loved relative. He had long been in declining health ; but for months before his decease, he was confined to his couch, and often suffering severely. Yet his last were his happiest days. He then attained perfect peace in believing, and when free from paroxysms of pain, his joy found expression in songs of praise. None did he employ more frequently than the words of the sixty-second Psalm :—

“ In God my glory placed is,
And my salvation sure ;
In God the rock is of my strength,
My refuge most secure.
Ye people, place your confidence
In him continually ;
Before him pour ye out your heart :
God is our refuge high.”

The end came at length. In the grey dawn of a December morning, he passed away. But a few

minutes previously, he had partaken of some refreshment, though unable himself to grasp the vessel in which it was ministered. Then he whispered to me, while his face was bright with the happy calm which filled his soul, "Come when the close of life may, I have no fear. It becomes us not to boast, but I have *not the least fear*." His pillow was then shaken up and re-arranged, as he expressed a desire to sleep. He fell over at once, and I stood by and gazed on his pleasant features in their sweet repose. Very speedily I observed a slight change, and a strange sort of shadow creeping upwards over his face. In a brief second or two it passed away, and my beloved friend was no longer with me. His body was sleeping the sleep of death.

It was the first time I had seen one breathe his last. A cold shudder ran through me. I shrank with horror from death. I asked myself, "Is there no other gateway from earth to heaven? Has not Jesus died, and endured all the curse, and why then must those die who are united to him?"

To speak of death as the believer's servant, or as actually in the inventory of his possessions, did not make the thought of its approach agreeable. I longed to escape such a visitant. Scripture told me that dissolution of the bodily frame was not *absolutely necessary* in order to an entrance into glory. Did not the Lord take up Enoch and Elijah at once into "the sweet fields of Eden?"

And is it not written, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the risen dead) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Neither was it enough to know that death has no sting for God's trusting child. Still, but with reverence, came the inquiry, "Why, if Christ has suffered death in my room and stead, should I, even with much dying grace, be called to meet a dying hour?"

Inquiry and reflection furnished at length an answer, sufficient to demonstrate the infinite wisdom and goodness of our Father in His arrangements for our departure from earth. I came to understand that *any marked distinction, patent to the eye of sense*, between the exit from this world of God's friends and enemies, would overturn the present scheme of things, and render this life intolerable.

There would be no longer room, as now, for faith, nor of course for unbelief. The final judgment would be practically set before our senses every day. God would not have the glory, which now arises to Him, from the child-like confidence of those who take Him at His word; while His foes, refusing to submit, would become very demons in hate.

Hope too would be extinguished, so far as the surviving relatives of the lost are concerned. As things are now, there is *generally* no such great and palpable difference, *to the eye of sense*, between the death of a child of God and a child of the devil, as to leave the friends of the reprobate without a hope to cling to. During some moments before the undying spirit left the body, the Saviour *may* have revealed Himself, and taught the departing one to cry "Remember me;" or if even this idea cannot possibly be entertained, the carnal-minded friends of those who have gone before, will flatter their hopes with false sentimentalisms about the peaceful grave, and the weary gone to rest, since the fact of the eternal perdition of their departed acquaintances has not been forced unmistakeably on their notice. With our present physical and mental constitutions, even the godly could not endure the revelation of the unceasing misery of those once near and dear to them, but who had died without a real interest in Christ. The unveiling thus of the future state would paralyse our energies, and we would cease to promote the all-wise designs of Jehovah.

I have been beside many a dying-bed since that first one to which I have referred, and I have learned that it is not the believer in Jesus but rather the survivor who dies. Death is stripped of its terror to the child of God. The living shrink, but he is fearless. Its clammy grasp he

can hail as the welcome, warm embrace of the living Redeemer. With calm assurance, or joyful hope, he can quit his mortal frame, and enter the world of eternal realities; for evermore Jesus fulfils His promise—"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Here and there throughout this volume, there are instances of the serenity and happiness with which Christians can die. Not the old merely, to whom earth could no longer present a temptation or a joy; but the young, before whom the vista of life was opening out with innumerable allurements and attractions, have been more than content to bid the world an everlasting farewell, and to enter into the joy of their Lord. For the encouragement of believers who may be somewhat in bondage through fear of death, and with the hope that others, who have not yet yielded to Christ, may be induced to choose the good part that shall not be taken away, I wish to present now some more detailed narratives of happy death-beds, selected from the records of my Young Women's Bible Class.

I. CAROLINE B——.

Caroline B—— joined the class in September 1861, at the age of seventeen. Her attendance was very regular till the end of the following January, when what appeared to be but a common

cold confined her to the house for some weeks. Her health improved, but only for a time, as her last appearance at our place of meeting was on the 2d of March. Observing her absence shortly thereafter, I found, in answer to my inquiry, that there was too much occasion to apprehend that consumption had seized her as its victim. Knowing well the deceptive nature of this form of disease, and feeling not a little solicitous about her eternal welfare, I set myself, as soon as circumstances would permit, to do the little I could to prepare her for the great change. Up to this period I had never spoken to her alone, nor, indeed, been in her father's house ; but I soon discovered that her mind was naturally very acute and retentive. Her education had been well attended to, and her talents had enabled her to take a high place in her classes when at school. The foundation of religious knowledge had been very well laid in her earlier years. Taught from infancy to pray, regular in attendance on the public services of religion, she had doubtless frequently felt the drawings of God's love in Christ. To be a Christian was *a* desire, if not *the chief* desire, of her heart ; but when first I had opportunity of close conversation on the subject, her view of the way of salvation was not clear, her hope was far from bright. Gradually the light from the throne of grace shone in. To be the Lord's, entirely and for ever, became her leading aspiration. She sought to lay hold on the

Saviour as her own, and to give herself to Him. For a little time she kept looking into her own bosom for evidences of faith as grounds for rejoicing ; but by-and-by she came to learn that the reason of faith's confidence and joy is simply and solely God's free gift of eternal life, in and with His Son Jesus Christ, and that it is only when we receive and rest on His wondrous love to us in Christ, that we can love Him, and serve Him as His dear children. First, she was able to say, "I *desire* to be Christ's ;" then, "I *hope* He is mine and I am His ;" and at length she reached such a steady confidence in Jesus, as may be best summed up in the words of the spouse, "My beloved is mine and I *am* His."

Heretofore, on religious subjects, she had scarcely ever uttered a word to any one. When, on the Sabbath evenings at home, the family, met round the fireside, would be remarking on this and that feature in the sermons they had heard during the day, Caroline attentively listened, but never would she venture the slightest remark of any kind. When, however, the Sun of Righteousness arose brightly on her soul with healing under His wings, this lily opened out her petals, drank in His grace greedily, and sweetly reflected His glory. One day I asked her if she felt happy in thinking of Jesus. She replied, "O yes, often very happy. In the forenoons I have generally an hour and a half or two hours all alone, and I enjoy it so much. I feel frequently as if I had

Jesus in my very arms as I lie here." Her bright eye told more than her words of her delight in communion with her Saviour. Suddenly the aspect of her countenance became sad, and she added, "Even then I feel sin within me." And many times afterwards did she complain of "the body of this death," and long for perfect deliverance. About this period of her illness a young lady, a distant relative, called; and the father of the visitor told me, as the earth was being shovelled on Caroline's coffin, how delighted his daughter had then been with the change in the invalid's conversation. In regard to life or death she was quite at ease; and, among other things, Caroline said to her relative, "I love Jesus, and I know He loves me." Trifling and carnal conversation was now distasteful to her; yet she felt it pleasant to hear about God's works, as well as to speak of His word. The promises of His grace had become very sweet. Many a text she got me to mark, that they might be afterwards read over again and again in her hearing. Like the prophet, she could say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

One evening, in the class, I had occasion to speak of the promise in Hosea, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou

shalt know the Lord ;” and to discuss the question, “When does the Lord thus betroth a sinner to Himself?” Next day I saw Caroline, and happened to mention the inquiry, when instantly she gave the right reply : “Jesus betroths us to Himself when we are made willing and betroth ourselves to Him.” I asked, surprised, “Where did you learn that?” and she answered, “From you. Don’t you remember how you told me, some weeks ago, a great deal about the offer of the Lord, and how He just waits for our consent?” I believe I had spoken to her somewhat fully on the subject, though I think I had not mentioned the text in Hosea, or discussed the matter formally in this aspect ; but her mind had fully grasped the conception that the proposal for reconciliation and union comes from the Lord. He puts Himself in the sinner’s power by the free offer of Himself and all His salvation ; and the moment the soul gives consent to His infinitely condescending and gracious application, *that* moment the engagement is closed. He is ours, and we are His.

Caroline had laid hold of the truth, and acted on it. She had taken the Lord at His word. Henceforth her delight was in Him whom she felt to be “the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.”

Having come to know and love Jesus, she had a strong desire “to spread the sweet savour of His name.” One day in special she stated to me

how sad she felt because she could do nothing for His glory. I tried to comfort her by telling her that "they also serve who only stand and wait;" that He does not look for impossibilities; that He accepts the desire as a deed; and that she could greatly glorify Him by patience and a happy trustfulness in her affliction. How much she did so, all who were near her can testify.

Several times after this period I found her uneasy in mind, because, having lost the sweet sense of the living presence of Jesus, she could not delight in Him as she had been wont to do. I quoted to her the text in Isaiah: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." And then I explained to her how the state of the body often affects the actings of the mind; and if this were not her case, how Christ is sovereign in the manifestations of Himself; that He sometimes withdraws, as it seems, to teach us to lean, not on sensible joys, but simply on His bare word, and to follow hard after Him. Like all true thirsters for God, she could not be at rest till she felt His presence again in whose favour is life; and long absent He never was. Sweet days of refreshing always succeeded brief cloudy times. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not

forsake them. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

The disease progressed steadily and pretty rapidly, but with comparatively little pain. May had advanced till near its close, and she was constantly confined to bed. It was still possible, however, that she might rally a little, and taste again the pleasure of sunshine in the open air. But another week passed, and strength daily declined. The time of departure was manifestly hastening on. Death had never been mentioned in our conversations, though I had drawn her attention gently to some hymns about departing hence, that had greatly cheered certain beloved ones of mine, who had left us and gone to the better land. No one, so far as I knew, had ever told her she could not recover; and I was anxious now that she should have the tidings gently broken. I asked her, then, one day, "Would it be a distress to you if Jesus should come and take you home to-night?" "O no, sir," was the prompt response. "Nothing in all the world would make me so glad as if He would come this very night." Judge how happy her answer made me. It was needless to say more on the subject. Her increasing weakness had taught her the probable end, and she was ready—"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The longing desire to depart and be with

Christ, found frequent expression during the last fortnight of her life. Often she asked me, with reference to her going hence, "Will it be to-night?" sometimes adding, "I hope He will come to-night."

Time would fail me to tell of our many agreeable conversations. She had a remarkably inquiring spirit. Why death still reigned, since Christ had died—the place and the occupations of heaven—whether we should know each other there—God's sovereignty in election—and many other topics were gone over, in consequence of certain questions which she put. Never did I need to explain a thing a second time. Her mind was so clear and powerful, that at once she comprehended an idea when placed before her. In spite of the sadness of her wasting sickness, it was really a pleasure to visit her. She was so affectionate to all around her; so candid and open in her converse, especially after she got a happy hope in Jesus; so full of child-like love, and confidence, and joy in the Lord; and so patient, and gentle, and modest, and grateful, that one could not but feel deeply interested in her.

For some days before her death, she had several severe attacks of pain and weakness, arising from the growing difficulty of breathing. The most severe was on the evening of Friday, the 20th June. On the Saturday she was very weak and far gone. The following Sabbath she revived somewhat, and it was to her, as she told me her-

self, a very sweet and happy day with Jesus. On Monday she enjoyed the same repose of spirit; and, indeed, she suffered no more from clouds covering her sun. The dawn of eternal day was at hand—the clouds had disappeared for ever. On Tuesday, the 24th, she suffered at intervals a good deal for want of breath. That afternoon, when one of these paroxysms came on, she looked up in my face in sore agony, and gasped out, “Oh, Mr. ——!” and I could not but feel how sad it would have been if, then, she had had to look for a resting-place for her soul. At eight o’clock that evening I bade her good-bye. She was wonderfully easy then. I spoke of coming in the morning to see her, and added a word about the everlasting kindness of Jesus. “Yes, He is kind,” was the response; “but I’m not half kind enough to Him.”

I was not long away till the breathlessness returned; but it disappeared after a painful struggle, and the sufferer had a time of rest. There seemed no likelihood of any sudden call. The watchers all retired save her father, who sat beside her bed, ministering the little things she now and again required.

Between one and two o’clock she asked for her hymn-book, and had sufficient strength to read for herself—

JESUS OUR REFUGE.

Jesus, lover of my soul !
Let me to thy bosom fly,

While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past ;
Safe into the haven guide,—
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee ;
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring,
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,—
Grace to pardon all my sin ;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee ;
Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

And then—

THE HAPPY LAND.

There is a happy land,
Far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day.
Oh, how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour King ;
Loud let his praises ring—
Praise, praise for aye.

Come to this happy land,
Come, come away ;

Why will ye doubting stand?
Why still delay?
Oh, we shall happy be,
When, from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall live with Thee—
Blest, blest for aye!

Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye—
Kept by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die.
On then to glory run;
Be a crown and kingdom won,
And bright above the sun
We'll reign for aye.

These hymns were an embodiment of the feelings and longings of her heart for, at least, two bygone months; and He whom she so loved and trusted, was about to fulfil the desires which Himself had created.

In a little after she looked out three more hymns, which she asked her father to read aloud. I doubt not but she found it hard to say to him the saddening words of parting; but she would cheer him with the expressions of her hope, and as about to wing her way to glory, would utter her farewell in words of comfort and consolation. Her father read the hymns desired. *First*, "THE VOICE OF JESUS," in which we have a true and cheering picture of her own happy experience:—

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was,
 All weary, worn, and sad ;
 I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 " Behold, I freely give
 The living water ; thirsty one,
 Sleep down, and drink and live."
 I came to Jesus, and I drank
 Of that life-giving stream ;
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
 And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 " I am this dark world's light ;
 Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
 And all thy day be bright."
 I looked to Jesus, and I found
 In Him my Star, my Sun ;
 And in that Light of Life I'll walk,
 Till travelling days are done.

Second, "THY WILL BE DONE,"—a farewell encouragement to child-like submission on the part of those left behind :—

My God, my Father, while I stray
 Far from my home in life's rough way,
 Oh, teach me from the heart to say,
 "Thy will be done!"

Though dark my path and sad my lot,
 May I be still, and murmur not ;
 But breathe the prayer divinely taught,—
 "Thy will be done!"

If Thou shouldst call me to resign
What most I prize ; it ne'er was mine,—
I only yield Thee what is Thine,—
“Thy will be done!”

Should pining sickness waste away
My strength in premature decay,
“My Father,” still I'll strive to say,
“Thy will be done!”

Renew my will from day to day,
Blend it with Thine, and take away
Whatever makes it hard to say,
“Thy will be done!”

Then when on earth I breathe no more
The prayer oft mixed with tears before,
I'll sing upon a happier shore,
“Thy will be done!”

And then, as if finished with earth, and hailing
with gladness the Redeemer's rapid approach,
there followed—*Third*, “LO, HE COMES :”—

Lo ! He comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain ;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train.
Halleluiah !
Jesus comes, and comes to reign !

Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty :
Those who set at nought and sold Him
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing !
Shall the true Messiah see.

When the solemn trump has sounded,
Heaven and earth shall flee away :
All who hate Him must, confounded,
Hear the summons of that day ;
Come to judgment !
Come to judgment ! come away !

Now redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear !
All His saints, by man rejected,
Rise to meet Him free from fear.
Halleluiah !
Shouts of welcome greet His ear.

Yes, amen ! let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne !
Saviour, take the power and glory,
Make Thy righteous sentence known :
O come quickly !
Claim the kingdom for Thine own !

These words, with their sweet yet solemn burden, were the last she desired to hear.

Two o'clock on the morning of the 25th June was past. Caroline was reposing in wonderful quietude, and it seemed as if another day on earth would yet dawn for her. The servant, who had retired early, was now called to take the watcher's place, while her father sought a little rest in bed, to prepare him for the duties of the coming day. About half-past two, he went to his own room. In a very few minutes thereafter, the servant came to say the dear girl was rapidly going. Father and mother repaired instantly to the bed of the dying. It was too manifest the change had come

Gently and sweetly was she breathing her life away. A few faint aspirations, and all was over. It was hardly possible to tell the precise moment of her flight to the happy land; but as the precious remains of the departed were being wrapped in the cerements of the grave, the clock struck three.

Suddenly, at cock crowing, the Master had come; but she was waiting, *watching*, READY, to go in to the marriage.

"Be ye also ready; for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh."


II. MARY W——.

On the 22d March 1863, the name of Mary W—— was added to our roll. During the following winter her health showed signs of declension; but in the summer of 1864 she rallied considerably, and resumed her attendance at the class. The foe within was only slumbering; and the disease speedily resumed its sway.

Early in 1864, I had frequent conversations with this young woman. I learned that some years before, when many in the city came to Jesus, she also had found hope in Christ. Forgetting, however, the injunction to watch, she had, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, lost her roll, and had fallen into a dull and sad condition of mind, in which she was continually writing bitter things against herself. Other friends as well as myself tried to

lead her again to Him who says, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." I am well assured too, that she sought by prayer to recover her former happy hope; but clouds and darkness continued to hide the Sun of Righteousness from her eyes.

On the first Sabbath and first day of 1865, I called to see the invalid. She was sitting by the fireside in the midst of the family, and I could not but notice how rapidly she was passing away. Her face told how despondent was still her condition; and with yearning heart I sought to minister consolation. A few days before, I had seen an interesting story regarding Sir William Napier. He had been walking on a country road, when he met a little girl whom he did not know, and who was crying bitterly. Inquiring kindly the cause of grief, he learned that the child had been to the field with her father's dinner; and as she was trotting home with the empty bowl, her foot had struck a stone, and she fell and broke the dish. It was one which her mother much valued, and the little one was very sad indeed at the thought of meeting her mother. The kind words of Sir William had awakened confidence in the child's heart. She looked up through her tears, and said—"Perhaps you can mend it." Sir William expressed his regret at being unable to gratify thus his little friend; but said he could perhaps give her a sixpence to buy a new bowl.



On examining his purse, he discovered that it was empty; but he told the child that he would meet her to-morrow at the same place and hour, and would bring her the sixpence then. Meanwhile she was to tell her mother not to be angry or to whip her, for that to-morrow the gentleman would be with the money according to his promise.

The girl went homewards rejoicing, and Sir William also soon returned to his residence in the neighbourhood. A letter was waiting for him, with an invitation to meet, next afternoon, some gentlemen from London, at the house of a friend about fifteen miles off. He sat for some time considering what he should do. He found that the distance to be travelled made it impossible to be with the gentlemen, *if he was to keep his appointment with the little girl*. Calling for writing materials, he penned a note expressing his regret at being unable, because of a previous engagement, to meet the friends whom he was really very desirous to see. Sealing and despatching his epistle, he then told Lady Napier the whole story, winding up with the remark, "I cannot do otherwise, for my little friend trusted me so entirely."

Narrating this incident, I tried to bring out its simple lesson:—If Sir William Napier would not break his promise, how much less can Jesus? Sir William might have died, or through some event, beyond his control, have been unable to do what he had said. But Jesus is Almighty,—Jesus controls all things;—and Jesus says "Come unto

me; him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." If the little child might trust Sir William, because he spoke so kindly, and looked so tenderly, how much more reason have we to trust Him who is love itself, and who never breaks the bruised reed, or quenches the smoking flax?

There was, as I afterwards discovered, some little light for Mary's darkened spirit in the story and its application. Reflection, under the guiding of the Holy Ghost, however, was needed to produce benefit; and I left that evening under a deep sense of my utter inadequacy to minister relief to a sin-burdened soul, without help from on high. Where else then could I carry her case but to the prayer-hearing God?

For a week I was under the necessity of being absent from home. Meanwhile Mary's rapidly declining strength impressed her with the idea that her time was short. With increasing frequency she was supplicating deliverance from the gloom which overhung her; and the cry of her heart at this time finds a fitting interpretation in Dr. Bethune's beautiful verses:—

"Come to my help, O Master! once in sorrow,
My more than brother—King of Glory now;
E'en in my tears a gleam of hope I borrow
From the deep scars around Thy radiant brow.

"Come to my help, as once God's angels hastened
To cheer *Thee* in Thy midnight agony;
Oh, Lord of angels! by man's suffering chastened,
Forget not I am dust—infirmity.

- "Come to me quickly, even as Thou hast spoken
Thy faithful word ; let me but hear Thy voice ;
Say Thou art with me, and the heart all broken,
Again with holy gladness shall rejoice.
- "Walk Thou the wave with me, the tempest stilling ;
Let me but feel the clasping of Thy strength—
Thy righteous strength—thro' all my pulses thrilling ;
Nor shall I fear to reach the shore at length."

On Wednesday, the 11th January, she found relief. Her widowed mother was sitting by the bedside, and said to her daughter that she could endure to part with her, if only she knew that her faith was fixed, and her heart at rest on Jesus. "That's all right now," was Mary's answer ; and sitting up in bed, she sung the whole of a hymn which had been a great favourite with her in her childhood, and of which I quote a single stanza :—

"Little travellers Zionward,
Each one entering into rest
In the kingdom of your Lord,
In the mansions of the blest.
There to welcome Jesus waits,
Gives the crown His followers win.
Lift your heads, ye golden gates,
Let the little travellers in."

The word, which especially brought her peace, was that in 1 Peter v. 7—"Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." It came with such power as to dispel her anxieties for ever.

No longer was her soul sealed up as it had been for months. She was not disinclined now to give utterance to her pious thoughts and aspirations,

so far as strength would permit. I saw her the following day, on my return home ; and obtained more insight into her views and feelings from that one interview, than I had found during all the previous year. When I spoke of the suffering she at times underwent, she answered, " It is nothing compared with what the Lord Jesus endured for me." When I suggested the sweet lines—

" Regions unknown are safe to you,
When I, your Friend, am there ; "

she replied, " The Paraphrase I like best is that beginning—

" I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend his cause,
Maintain the glory of his cross,
And honour all his laws."

And ere I left her, she begged me to convey a special message to the whole of her class-mates—" to be sure and give themselves to Jesus in the day of health and strength."

On the evening of Sabbath the 15th, I paid my last visit to Mary. " Weak and worn " in body she was, but happy in spirit. Christ had filled her with His own peace. A night of physical anguish followed, but her heart was stayed, trusting in the Lord. The sun of earth had not long begun his race next morning, when she left this troubled scene ; and her eyes beheld the King in His beauty, and the glory of the land where sorrow and sighing have for ever fled away.

III. JANE M——

Jane M—— lost her mother in December 1863, a few months after she had joined my class. Being the only daughter left at home, the young house-keeper laboured, up to and beyond her strength, to promote the comfort of her father and brothers. Her blithe spirit and affectionate disposition rendered her the light of the dwelling, and drew to her all her relations, especially her nearest and dearest.

Within a year after her mother's death, symptoms of declining health appeared. Naturally possessed of an inquiring mind, she had always been fond of reading, and nothing delighted her so much as religious biographies. Her failing health, however, no doubt roused her to personal application of the truth ; and in the spring of 1865 she had thoroughly realized her need of a Saviour, and given herself away, as a poor sinner, to Jesus, to be washed in His blood and purified by His Spirit.

During the summer she spent some weeks in Rothesay ; and there she had a sudden and very severe hemorrhage from the lungs. This reduced her greatly ; and brought face to face with death, there was much questioning within her, as to whether all was right with her soul for eternity. It was when slowly recovering from this attack, that she penned the following lines to me :—

“ This is the first day I have felt well enough

to answer your kind letter. I must thank you for your kind sympathy. Oh how I wish I could feel more that Jesus is sympathizing with me. Dear Mr.—, will you pray for me that I may get the Holy Spirit daily to soften this hard heart. I think if I had a greater sense of my own sinfulness, that I would love Jesus more. Oh, I wish very much to keep in mind that I may never get better again ; but my heart feels so hard, and I forget so easily, that I feel if it depended on my works that I should get saved, I would give up at once. Oh, I feel so glad that it does not depend on myself, and that, if I only believe, I shall be saved, for Jesus has done it all already. Oh, how I wish I had more faith to believe, but I know if I come aright to Jesus, that He will strengthen it. Pray for me, Mr.—, that I may be taught how to ask aright."

After a time Jane returned to Glasgow ; and I saw her occasionally during the weeks she spent here, before going to visit some relatives on the Firth of Forth. Her weakness kept her much in bed ; but her faith was strengthening, and her peace and joy increasing. Her visit to the east country she enjoyed greatly, but the progress of the disease was not stayed. At the beginning of October she returned to her father's house—only to die.

On the 23d, I paid her a visit. Grasping my hand, when I went to her bedside, she said :—" Oh, I am glad you have come, for the doctor has

just been here, and declares I have only a few days now to live." It was wise not to hide the true state of the case; but the announcement came upon her so unexpectedly, even after her long illness, that she was considerably distressed. Sin, her sin, rose before her mind; and the coming judgment cast its shadow over her spirit, and roused her fears. Wonder not that though she had fled to Jesus months before, she should feel a temporary alarm at the utterance of the solemn verdict which her physician had delivered. Such a sudden blast was calculated to startle even the oldest Christian. I sat down beside her, and talked of the "fountain opened." Ere I left, peace flowed like a river again. Christ's work for sinners, and Christ's precious promises had but to be recalled to her mind to allay every anxiety and dispel every cloud. From that hour there was only a growing brightness of hope, though she was much oppressed with weakness of body, and difficulty in breathing.

My last interview with Jane was on the 30th October. In all my later visits, the only thing that made her smile with gladness was converse about Jesus. The glory of His person, the power of His arm, the love of His heart, the suitableness of His salvation, the sweetness and the faithfulness of His promises, were her joy and crown. During our last conversation, she told me that the previous night had been peculiarly pleasant, in spite of all her suffering. The presence of her Redeemer had

been enjoyed, and the promises of His grace had filled her heart with unspeakable comfort. For a week past indeed, all fear of death had disappeared; and now she was longing to depart and be with Jesus. The desire was speedily fulfilled. On the 1st of November, about one o'clock in the afternoon, the Master came to call her up higher; and her ransomed spirit winged its way to glory.

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

IV. MAGGIE W——.

In May 1867, I was not a little dispirited in regard to the work of God among my pupils. Amid much outward prosperity, there were few perceptible tokens of spiritual blessing; and so far as the unconverted were concerned, I seemed to be labouring in vain.

I had given some expression to my anxiety on this subject one evening during the lesson. At the close, Maggie W—— waited behind. A happy spirit within lighted up her countenance, as she related how, some months before, during a class lesson, she had been convinced of her sin and her need of a Saviour. After a period of darkness, she had found heart-rest in Jesus. I asked why she had not let me know anything of this before. She replied that she did not like to do it, lest she should fall away; but after what I had said that night, she could no longer conceal it from me. *It was very encouraging to receive such tidings.*

The Lord had indeed been amongst us when I knew it not,—the shrinking modesty and humility of my young friend having prevented earlier explanation.

During the summer, Maggie visited some relatives in Argyleshire. On one occasion, while in company with a number of young people there, the conversation happened to turn upon death. All in the circle, except Maggie, expressed their dread of the last enemy, counting it a terrible thing to be cut off in early life. Her acquaintances could not but wonder when, with calm joy beaming from her face, she avowed that she had no fear of death, and would esteem it a pleasure to leave the world and go to be with Jesus. The Holy Spirit was indeed working in her heart and preparing her for an early departure.

A cold caught in autumn settled down upon her lungs, and ere long the symptoms became alarming. By January 1868, she was entirely confined to the house, and slowly but steadily the disease advanced. During the weary weeks and months which followed, her heart was buoyed up by heavenly consolations. Her memory was richly stored with Scripture truth, especially with psalms and hymns, and she was peculiarly ready to profit by spiritual conversation. Simply by smiles or brief responses, did she generally indicate how much she relished remarks about her Saviour's love, and the perfection of His atoning work. When, however, the visitor had departed,

she would again and again go over the subjects with her mother, and thus she fed upon the truth of God.

It was a matter of great regret to Maggie that, while still able to go out a little, she had not pressed past every obstacle, and confessed her Master at the Communion in October 1867. I mention this for the benefit of young readers who love Jesus, and yet are postponing the public declaration of their attachment. Fear of falling away should not keep them back. Decision produces strength, not weakness; and none who lean simply and constantly on Christ need question His power to uphold. It will be a comfort on a dying-bed to reflect that, though amidst much fainting and failing, we have been privileged to act as witnesses for Christ on earth.

Maggie suffered greatly towards the close from pain and weakness. Once when in much bodily anguish, I quoted to her the remark of Samuel Rutherford:—"Fear not; the sea-sick passenger shall come safe to land, and Jesus Himself will be the first to meet you on the shore." This thought was graciously blessed to cheer her, during the sadly distressing days and nights through which she had yet to pass.

The sinking of suffering nature I need not attempt to describe. Amid it all, her eye was fixed on Jesus. Again and again she told me that she felt perfect confidence in Him. Only *once* was she for a brief space in darkness, but

the lamp of life soon dispelled the gloom ; and during one of my later visits, she broke through her usual reserve, and spoke much of her adorable Saviour's kindness towards her, and how He had answered her prayers.

A day or two before her departure, her pastor called. He said a good deal about the dark valley through which she was passing. When he left, Maggie asked her mother what he meant by it. She could not comprehend the idea, for the valley was not dark to her. Jesus lighted it all through with love divine.

While life was ebbing away, her mother quoted to her many of the rich promises of the Bible, and Maggie responded to all. Once she remarked, "Jesus is worthy, but I am not." And when her mother observed that "the sea-sick passenger would come safe to land," Maggie finished the sentence, saying, "Jesus Himself will be the first to meet me on the shore." Gently she breathed out her life, and without the slightest struggle entered into rest at half-past one on the morning of the 6th of June.

The only sorrow Maggie had in the earlier weeks of her close confinement to bed, was the thought of leaving her widowed mother, to whom she had been a great help for years. God Himself at length wiped all her tears on this account away ; and calmly and hopefully she could therefore say, even to her mother, *farewell*. Constitutionally active, industrious in her habits, and affectionate

in disposition, a loving daughter and sister, and a faithful friend, grace beautified her character and made her still more worthy of regard. Of the charity that "vaunteth not itself; that thinketh no evil; that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that hopeth all things, and endureth all things," she had a large measure granted to her. Looking unto Jesus, she lived happily all the days of her Christian life. Looking unto Jesus she departed, filled with the great peace of the children of God.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

CONCLUSION.

The four young friends, whose last days I have tried to sketch, all left this world between the seventeenth and twentieth years of their age. Contemplating these "flowers," so early "withered by the north wind's breath," we are anew impressed with a sense of the uncertainty and brevity of life. Herrick's touching lines naturally occur to our remembrance :—

"Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon :
 Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
 Has run

But to the even-song ;
 And, having prayed together, we
 Will go with you along !

“ We have short time to stay, as you ;
 We have as short a spring,
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you or anything :
 We die,
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away
 Like to the summer's rain,
 Or as the pearls of morning dew,
 Ne'er to be found again.”

“ Found again,” certainly not here, but yonder, —whither they have, like morning dew-drops, been drawn up by the loving beams of the Sun of Righteousness. However painfully missed from their family circles, dear ones left behind have the blessed consolation that, amongst the white-robed company before the throne, those gone before are waiting for their friends. Such a thought is quickening too,—bestirring to more faithful following “ of them who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises.” And if, indeed, we are running the Christian race, as our beloved did who have entered into rest, we shall at the last be able to appreciate and adopt for ourselves the sentiments of the dying wife and mother, so beautifully depicted by Lady Nairne:—

“ I'm wearin' awa, John,
 Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John ;
 I'm wearin' awa
 To the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither could nor care, John ;
The day's aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

" Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith guid and fair, John ;
And, oh ! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John ;
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal."

" As the tree falleth, so shall it lie." Once through the veil that hides eternal things from our view, there can be no returning to rectify mistakes, to seek a rejected or neglected Saviour. *Now* then, if ever, must we be making our calling and election sure. " Of our safety for eternity, we cannot make *too* sure ;" but if, as " guilty, weak, and helpless worms," we daily cast ourselves upon our Saviour-God, He will perfect what concerns us, and bring us safe to glory. Watching unto prayer, we shall not be alarmed though at midnight the cry be made, " Behold the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet Him." Having our loins girt, and lamps burning, our hearts will echo the tidings with a joyful " Hosanna," and we shall enter in with our Lord to the marriage.

" Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES OF

"Heavenly Love and Earthly Echoes."

"A most readable book, full of fresh thought, and enlivened with bright anecdote."—*Evening Hours*.

"An admirable little volume. Full of tender counsel and wise experience."—*The Freeman*.

"Deserves to become a favourite. It is a very pleasing volume."—*The Record*.

"The 'Glasgow Merchant' has unquestionable literary power. His work is eminently readable, and will, we hope, command a wide circulation."—*The Weekly Review*.

"Simple, direct, pointed, and eminently practical. We cordially commend the volume as well fitted to be useful to the general reader."—*The United Presbyterian Magazine*.

"Very readable from its many practical illustrations and anecdotes. We commend the spirit of the book most highly."—*The Sword and the Trowel*.

EDMONSTON & DOUGLAS, EDINBURGH,

AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

By the same Author.

THE REASON OF HOPE.

25th Thousand. Price One Penny.

THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH.

20th Thousand. Price One Penny.

I MUST KEEP THIS FEAST:

THE COMMUNICANT'S MOTIVES FOR OBSERVING
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

15th Thousand. Price One Penny, or 6s. per 100.

GETHSEMANE.

Price One Penny, or 6s. per 100.

THE PASSOVER.

Price One Penny, or 6s. per 100.

~~~~~

"These little books are fine examples of the simplicity, directness, and popular style which are so desirable in recommending religious truth to the masses. They are eminently fitted to be useful to those who either have not the time or the intellectual training needful to follow more elaborate treatises."  
—*Daily Review*.



